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ABSTRACT

The state of Washington implemented the Readiness to Learn program as part of the state's Family Policy Initiative. The primary goal of the program is to serve as a formal link between education and human services by authorizing grants to local school-linked, community-based consortia to develop and implement strategies that ensure children arrive at school ready to learn. This report describes the program and details evaluation findings for 1998-1999. Chapter 1 of the report describes the need for Readiness to Learn programs, the funding history, goals and expected outcomes, general service delivery strategies, and key evaluation questions. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the 31 local programs funded in 1997-1999 and the characteristics of the children and families serviced during the 1998-1999 school year. Chapter 3 reports on the services received by children and families. Chapter 4 addresses the extent to which Readiness to Learn met the needs of children and families. Chapter 5 discusses the impact of these services on children and families. Chapter 6 discusses program contributions to community safety. Chapter 7 discusses the ways the program has contributed to systemic changes in service delivery to families and children. Chapter 8 highlights the successful practices in adhering to the eight Family Policy Initiative principles of service integration. A table detailing characteristics of Washington Readiness to Learn Programs is appended. (Contains 11 references.) (KB)

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## Readiness To Learn

# Evaluation Report

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**Dr. Terry Bergeson**
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

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1999

# Washington State Readiness to Learn

## *School-Linked Models for Integrated Family Services*

*1998–99 Evaluation Report*

Prepared for

**Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**
Old Capitol Building
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Prepared by

**RMC Research Corporation**
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Portland, OR 97204

**December 1999**

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Funding was provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction from Readiness to Learn program funds.

# Washington State Readiness to Learn

## *School-Linked Models for Integrated Family Services*

*1998–99 Evaluation Report*

***Volume 1***

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**December 1999**

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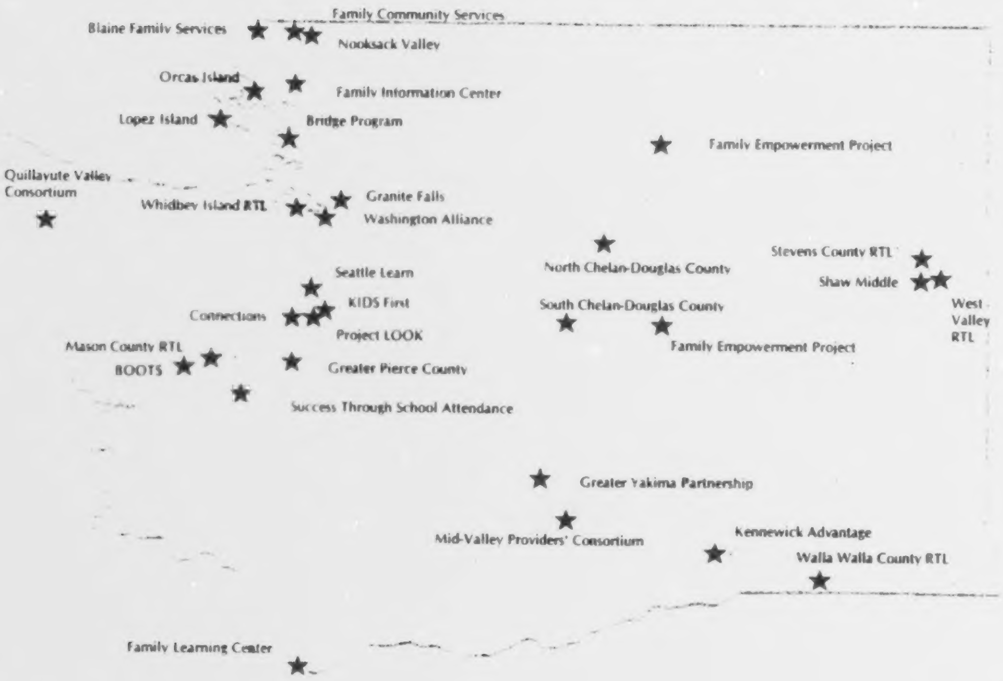
# Map of Washington Readiness to Learn Programs


Family Community Services
Blaine Family Services
Nooksack Valley
Orcas Island
Family Information Center
Lopez Island
Bridge Program
Family Empowerment Project
Quillayute Valley Consortium
Whidbey Island RTL
Granite Falls
Washington Alliance
North Chelan-Douglas County
Stevens County RTL
Shaw Middle
West Valley RTL
Seattle Learn
KIDS First
Connections
Project LOOK
South Chelan-Douglas County
Family Empowerment Project
Mason County RTL
BOOTS
Greater Pierce County
Success Through School Attendance
Greater Yakima Partnership
Mid-Valley Providers' Consortium
Kennewick Advantage
Walla Walla County RTL
Family Learning Center

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of sites | 31 |
| Number of school districts | 108 |
| Number of school buildings | 350 |

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We acknowledge the many people who contributed to the evaluation of the Readiness to Learn program. Chris McElroy of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction provided support and guidance for the evaluation. Readiness to Learn program coordinators and staff provided helpful suggestions regarding the evaluation activities and coordinated the family and student data collection at their programs, and families, students, and teachers took time to complete data collection forms. Karla Wadeson of RMC Research edited this report and Kay Calendine of RMC Research applied her word processing and graphics skills to the production of this report.

# Prologue

Many children in Washington and the nation suffer the effects of poverty, language and cultural differences, neglect and abuse, substance abuse problems, and family dysfunction.

> A sick child cannot learn, and a challenging curriculum cannot be mastered by a child confronting chaos at home. The school cannot solve all these problems alone. . . .

Many educators feel ill-equipped to deal with the complex problems students bring to school and favor collaborative efforts between schools and human service agencies to help troubled students. Many states are now considering how the education and human services systems can work together to effectively meet the multifaceted needs of families.

> The solution to these multiple problems is not as simple as expanding existing programs. We need a complete overhaul of children's services.
> *(Kirst, 1992)*

The Readiness to Learn program represents Washington State's effort to solve these difficult problems. Local consortia funded through the program develop service plans that are responsive to the needs of the children, youth, and families in their communities.

> We are revolutionizing the way we serve children in our state and it promises to be a system that is more effective and efficient. Children and their families will receive better support and services because school and community are working together sharing information and expertise.
> *(Bergeson, 1997)*

These local consortia have developed decentralized, seamless service systems that provide support and developmental opportunities for children and families in need. The successful evolution of the Readiness to Learn program demonstrates the value of schools and community organizations working together to nurture children and families.

## What Is Readiness to Learn?

The Family Policy Initiative enacted in 1992 united the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Social and Health Services; the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; the Employment Security Department; members of the four legislative caucuses; and the Governor's office in a principle-based approach to the goal of producing better outcomes for children and families. This shared vision was aimed at reducing barriers to effective collaboration efforts in local communities.

The primary goal for the Readiness to Learn program is that children and youth be successful in school. Readiness to Learn serves as a formal link between education and human services by authorizing grants to local school-linked, community-based consortia to develop and implement strategies that ensure children arrive at school every day "ready to learn." The mission of Readiness to Learn is to create a committed continuing partnership among schools, families, and communities that will provide opportunities for all young people to achieve at their highest learning potential; live in a safe, healthy, civil environment; and grow into productive community members. The six program goals Readiness to Learn programs strive to achieve intend for students to:

- Be successful in school.
- Be safe in the home.
- Be safe in the neighborhood.
- Be healthy.
- Be free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Have access to work training/retraining and career pathways.

The Readiness to Learn program was created by the 1993 Legislature through section IV of ESHB 1209, the Education Reform Act. Readiness to Learn operationalized the Family Policy Initiative's principles. The primary purpose of Readiness to Learn is to link education and other human service providers together in an effort to solve problems and improve service integration, service delivery, and educational success for students. The program also intends, over time, to prepare students to meet the high academic standards required by the Education Reform Act. Over the past six years Readiness to Learn programs in Washington State have accomplished many of their objectives for service integration and service delivery to children and families. As a result of these services, more children arrive at school ready to learn and attain the skill needed to meet the state's essential academic learning requirements.

## Who Participates in Readiness to Learn?

Readiness to Learn programs are funded in communities ranging from small and rural to large and urban, and service areas ranging from individual school districts to multiple-county collaborations. In 1998–99, nearly 53 percent of the children who participated in Readiness to Learn were elementary school students in kindergarten through Grade 5. More than half of the participants were white (58 percent), and 38 percent lived in two-parent families. The most frequent reasons for referral to Readiness to Learn were academic problems (44 percent), school behavior problems (29 percent), family problems (27 percent), unmet basic family needs (27 percent), and low interest in school (22 percent).

## What Are the Services Children and Families Receive?

Readiness to Learn programs provide a wide range of services to meet the educational, health, and family functioning needs of the children and families they serve. In 1998–99 a total of 4,223 families received services through Washington's Readiness to Learn program, and a total of 4,983 children were served three or more times. Eighty-three percent of the families took part in Readiness to Learn services related to the education of their children, such as student advocacy, behavior interventions, tutoring, and academic counseling. Forty-three percent of families participated in activities designed to increase their involvement in the education of their children. Meeting basic needs and improving family functioning were also important areas of service to over 50 percent of the families. Readiness to Learn staff provided a higher percentage of direct services in the areas of child education, parent involvement, parent education, transportation to appointments, and translation services than in other areas. Typically, Readiness to Learn staff linked families to the services they needed either by providing information or by making referrals. Staff most often referred families for basic needs, health, and counseling services. Readiness to Learn programs also provided a variety of group services. In 1998–99, 1,006 group activities were provided.

## To What Extent Do Services Meet Child and Family Needs?

Readiness to Learn programs assess individual family needs and provide a variety of services tailored to meet those needs. Needs are more likely to be met when they are short-term rather than long-term in nature. Families generally reported being very satisfied with the services they received and appreciating that these services had been tailored to their needs and delivered with respect and sensitivity. Families indicated that the services had empowered them to identify and seek out help in the future.

## What Impact Do Services Have on Children and Families?

Program staff reported at least one outcome for most participating families. Three-fourths of the families reported an outcome with a direct impact on children's performance in school or parent involvement in the children's education. Over one-half of the families reported an outcome related to a mental health issue (54 percent) or a basic family need such as food or clothing (57 percent).

At the elementary school level, teachers reported improvement in the classroom performance of 57 percent of the students referred for academic problems. Elementary school teachers observed significantly fewer attendance problems at the end of the school year for students that received Readiness to Learn services. Teachers rated a significant improvement in behavior among students who had been referred for inappropriate behavior.

At the middle school and high school levels, no significant overall improvement was observed in GPA, although 46 percent of the students made improvements. Actual attendance data at all grade levels revealed no significant change in the average number of days absent, even though 43 percent of the students improved their attendance. Students referred to Readiness to Learn for behavioral problems had received significantly fewer office referrals or detentions on average at follow-up. In terms of suspensions, 20 percent of the students with behavior referrals showed a reduction in the number of days suspended, although there was no statistically significant change in the average number of days suspended.

## How Has Readiness to Learn Contributed to Community Safety?

Readiness to Learn program coordinators reported that their schools provided services related to alcohol and other prevention and intervention services, conflict resolution, and behavior and academic problems. Program coordinators also reported that their neighborhoods provided services that support safety, healthy activities, and an environment supportive of healthy youth development. Program coordinators indicated that Readiness to Learn positively impacts school and neighborhood safety either directly through Readiness to Learn programs or indirectly by increasing awareness of and involvement in positive activities and support networks.

## How Has Readiness to Learn Contributed to Systemic Change?

RTL coordinators indicated that programs have contributed to service integration through networking with community services and by hiring staff who provide creative, barrier-free services. Programs have brought about systemic changes in service delivery through the kinds of services they provide, resulting in decreased waiting times for families who need services. Programs have also contributed to changing cultural and community attitudes by providing bilingual and bicultural staff and by working to increase cooperation by community agencies and school districts. These changes have been brought about largely by frequent, open, and honest communication and by regular meetings of consortium members.

# What Is Readiness to Learn?

The Readiness to Learn program originated from the concern that many children and youth in Washington State go to school with a multitude of problems that make it difficult for them to succeed. In 1991 the Governor of Washington State called together a blue-ribbon committee, the Governor's Council on Education Reform and Funding (GCERF), to study the state's education system. The Readiness to Learn initiative emerged from the grassroots efforts of community forums, town meetings, local community advocates, and visionary state leaders. A subcommittee of the council studied programs designed to prepare students to enter public schools and found that often these programs were fragmented and that many services were duplicated. In its final report to the Legislature, GCERF recommended that state agencies work together to create coordinated, collaborative, flexible, and creatively integrated services for children, youth, and their families, emphasizing the concept of parents as first teachers. The council further recommended that this program become part of education reform efforts and receive funding for the 1993–95 biennium.

The Education Reform Act passed in 1993 (ESHB 1209) marked the genesis of the Readiness to Learn program. The act brought together education, human services, health services, and job training for children and their families. The sum of $8 million was appropriated for the program in the 1993–95 biennium and the Superintendent of Public Instruction was assigned the responsibility of implementing the program.

Each of the 31 local consortia that receives grant funds through Readiness to Learn has a service plan that is comprehensive, intensive, and responsive to the needs of children, youth, and their families. Most programs are school-linked and sometimes school-based, and the planning for and delivery of services are collaborative. The evolution of the Readiness to Learn program has demonstrated the importance of community organizations working together to develop a decentralized and seamless service system that provides necessary support and developmental opportunities to those in need.

## The Need for Readiness to Learn

The Legislature determined that a child is ready to learn when he or she has the physical and emotional health, the social skills, and the capacity to actively and positively engage in the learning process on his or her first day of school and every day thereafter. However, lawmakers, educators, and other concerned citizens recognized that many children arrive at school without these requisite conditions and skills. The University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine (1999, p. 4) reported the depth and pervasiveness of these challenges in several key areas:

- **Family and Community:** The number of divorces involving children and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births continue to rise. Many teens say that they know few adults they can talk to about important matters and that they are not encouraged and supported by neighbors. The number of children in foster and out out-of-home placements is growing past the capacity of the system to handle this need.
- **Economic Well-Being:** One in three children continues to live in a family without adequate income to afford the basic necessities.
- **Health:** Indicators of good medical care, such as infant mortality and immunization rates, continue to improve, but other indicators show no cause for complacency. The teen suicide rate is still unacceptably high. A high rate of depression exists among youth, which has grave consequences in many areas of behavior. Drug use is increasing.
- **Education:** Although education reform is beginning to show some improvements in Grade 4 performance, the goal that most students achieve basic standards of competence in reading, writing, and math has yet to be achieved. The learning needs of most minority students are not met. Children start school eager to learn, but are progressively turned off by lack of challenge and stimulation in school.
- **Safety and Security:** Many indicators show that violent behaviors and acceptance of violence are highly prevalent among youth and mirror adult behaviors and attitudes.

Adolescent deaths from firearms and homicide still range close to all-time high levels.

Readiness to Learn is part of Washington State's comprehensive education reform effort to improve conditions for children and families that face these challenges.

## The Legislative Mandate and Funding for Readiness to Learn

The Family Policy Initiative, a collaborative effort of five Washington State agencies, represents the state's commitment to reforming the delivery of education and human services to children and families. The agencies that worked together to produce the Family Policy Initiative included the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Department of Social and Health Services; the Department of Health; the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; and the Employment Security Department.

In 1992 the Legislature established the Family Policy Council (FPC) to oversee reforms under the Family Policy Initiative. The FPC includes representatives from each of the five agencies responsible for the Family Policy Initiative, one representative from each caucus of the Legislature, and the Governor's office. The Legislature also enacted eight principles that affirm the pro-family goals of the Family Policy Initiative. These eight principles define services and supports as locally planned, coordinated, family-oriented, customer service-oriented, culturally relevant, creative, community-based and preventive, and outcome-oriented. These principles provide broad, philosophical policy guidance for communities planning and implementing family programs.

As a section of the state's 1993 Education Reform Act (ESHB 1209, § 901), Readiness to Learn serves as a formal link between education and human services. The legislation authorized grants to local community-based consortia to develop and implement strategies to ensure that children arrive at school ready to learn. In the 1993–95 biennium the Legislature appropriated $8 million to fund 22 program proposals from these local consortia. In the 1995–97 biennium the Legislature appropriated $7.2 million to extend funding for 20 existing, viable Readiness to Learn programs and six new programs. In 1997 the Legislature once again affirmed its support for the Readiness to Learn program by appropriating $7.2 million for the 1997-99 biennium. Thirty-one programs were funded during this biennium.

## Outcomes and Indicators for Readiness to Learn

The vision of Readiness to Learn is ensuring student success through committed community partnerships. The mission of Readiness to Learn is to create a committed continuing partnership among schools, families, and communities that will provide opportunities for all young people to:

- Achieve at their highest learning potential.
- Live in a safe, healthy, civil environment.
- Grow into productive community members.

The primary goal for Readiness to Learn is that ***children and youth will be successful in school.*** The following indicators reflect the progress that a local program is making toward this goal:

- Improvement in grade point average (GPA).
- Improvement in number of credits earned and school completion rates.
- Improvement in school attendance.
- Reduction in tardy and truancy rates.
- Reduction of student behavior problems.

In addition, Readiness to Learn programs strive to achieve five other program outcomes. These outcomes are that ***children and youth will:***

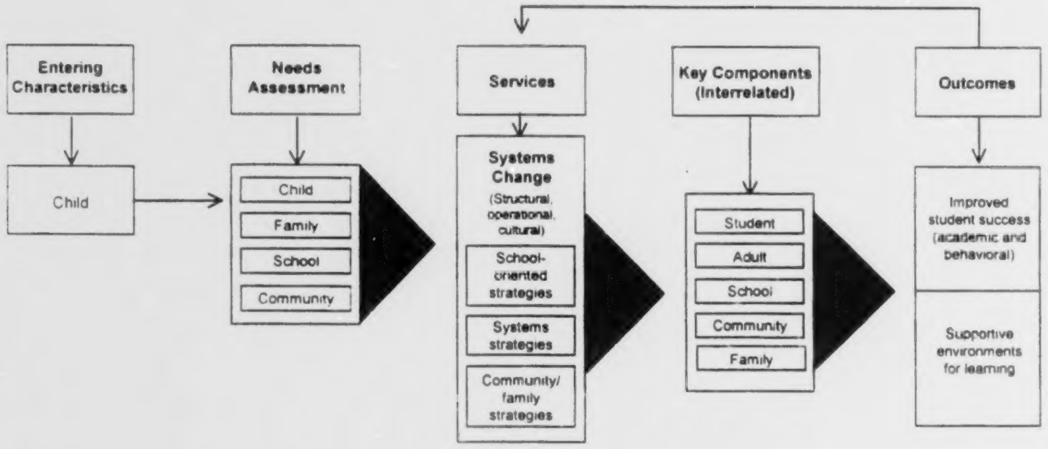
- Be safe in the home.
- Be safe in the neighborhood.

- Be healthy.
- Be free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Have access to work training/retraining and career pathways.

## Conceptual Model

The Readiness to Learn model empowers communities to identify the needs of children and their families and implement strategies that will result in measurable outcomes. Exhibit 1 illustrates the hypothesized chain of events that ultimately lead to improved school success for children. The model shows that child and family characteristics and needs drive service delivery in support of key elements related to student success. The model suggests that as needs are met through appropriate services, children are more likely to experience improved student success and learning environments become more supportive of students.

**Exhibit 1**
**Readiness to Learn Program Design**


Entering Characteristics
Child
Needs Assessment
Child
Family
School
Community
Services
Systems Change
(Structural, operational, cultural)
School-oriented strategies
Systems strategies
Community/family strategies
Key Components (Interrelated)
Student
Adult
School
Community
Family
Outcomes
Improved student success (academic and behavioral)
Supportive environments for learning

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## Readiness-to Learn Strategies

Local Readiness to Learn programs employ many of the strategies commonly shared by other efforts to provide comprehensive, collaborative services (Burt, Resnick, and Matheson, 1992; Dryfoos, 1994; Knapp, 1995; Levy and Shepardson, 1992; Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh, 1993). These strategies include:

- Treating children as part of families, neighborhoods, and communities.
- Conducting comprehensive, individualized assessments to identify the full range of child and family needs and assets.
- Developing a coordinated service plan to ensure that services are efficiently delivered to meet all identified needs.
- Offering school-linked or school-based programs that provide services to children at or near the school.
- Grouping services together in the same location—for example, mental health workers or health professionals may be located in a school or in a community family center.
- Collaborating on the planning and delivery of services.
- Monitoring to ensure that services are delivered appropriately and that proper program coordination takes place.

More information about the services provided through Readiness to Learn and the strategies of individual programs is presented in the following chapters of this report.

## Evaluation Activities

Evaluation data collected during 1998–99 addressed systems change, service utilization, and outcomes for children and families. Systems change was assessed through questionnaires completed by each program in spring 1997 and spring 1999. The questionnaires asked consortium members and program coordinators to rate their status in providing services that are locally planned, coordinated, family-oriented, customer service-oriented, culturally relevant, creative, community-based and preventive, and outcome-oriented.

Service utilization and outcome data were collected using three sets of forms: service and outcome records, client satisfaction records, and group service logs. The service and outcome records consisted of four components:

1. *Utilization of Services.* This component was used to record the number and types of services provided directly or through referrals and a staff rating of whether outcomes were achieved in meeting the child's or family's needs in each area. Services were grouped into five broad categories: education of the child, employment or adult education, basic needs, health, and family functioning/mental health. The utilization of services component was completed for all family services.
2. *Intake Information.* This component was used to record background information on the child, the source of the referral to Readiness to Learn, and the primary reasons for referral. The intake information component was completed for children who received three or more services.
3. *School Records.* This component was used to record baseline (prior to Readiness to Learn referral) and follow-up (end of the school year) information on attendance, grades (if available), and the number of office detentions and days suspended. For high school students, enrollment status and employment status were also recorded. The school records component was completed for students who received three or more services.
4. *Teacher Ratings.* This component was used for elementary school students to record baseline and follow-up ratings of academic performance, school behavior, and the parent-school partnership. The teacher ratings component was completed for students who received three or more services.

Client satisfaction records were completed by staff on a systematic sample of families to assess their perceptions of the services they received from Readiness to Learn.

The group services log was used to document services provided to groups rather than individual children or their families. Group services include such activities as community resource or health fairs, parent training workshops, school assemblies, and after-school or summer activities for children. Program staff were asked to record each activity, the primary purpose of the activity, and the number of participants. Many activities intended to prevent later problems or improve relationships between schools and communities were documented on group services logs.

Readiness to Learn staff were asked to submit data collection forms by July 15, 1999, for the services provided during the 1998-99 school year. Program staff also provided second-year outcome data for students who began receiving services during the previous school year. These data were entered into a database at RMC Research and served as the basis for this report.

## Purpose of the Summary Report

This summary report provides an overview of Readiness to Learn, the efforts of local programs funded through Readiness to Learn, and the achievements of these programs during the 1997-99 biennium. The intended audience for the report is the reader who wants an easily understood synopsis of the goals, objectives, services, and achievements of Readiness to Learn during the last year. This audience is composed of legislators, educators, concerned parents, and agency service providers. In-depth descriptions of the 31 local programs are presented in a separate document.

The report addresses the following questions:

- What Is Readiness to Learn? (Chapter 1)
- Who Participates in Readiness to Learn? (Chapter 2)
- What Are the Services Children and Families Receive? (Chapter 3)

- To What Extent Do Services Meet Child and Family Needs? (Chapter 4)
- What Impact Do Services Have on Children and Families? (Chapter 5)
- How Has Readiness to Learn Contributed to Community Safety? (Chapter 6)
- How Has Readiness to Learn Contributed to Systemic Change? (Chapter 7)
- What Readiness to Learn Practices Are Most Promising and What Challenges Do Programs Face? (Chapter 8)
- Is Readiness to Learn Working? (Chapter 9)

# Who Participates in Readiness to Learn?

The 31 local Readiness to Learn programs are listed in Exhibit 2, which indicates the fiscal agent for each program, the number of school districts served by each program, and each program's primary service delivery features. The communities served by programs vary greatly—ranging from small rural communities to large urban areas and from individual school districts to countywide collaborations.

**Exhibit 2**
**Local Readiness to Learn Programs**

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | No. of School Districts Served | Program Features |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Connections | Vashon Island School District | 1 | Community mentors<br>Family support workers |
| 3 | Family Learning Center | Camas School District | 2 | Family literacy skills |
| 5 | Greater Yakima Partnership for Children and Families | ESD 105 | 2 | Early intervention<br>Mentoring<br>K–3 health curriculum<br>Counseling, case management<br>Family literacy skills |
| 6 | Greater Pierce County Consortium for Children and Families | Puget Sound ESD | 16 | Family support workers<br>Locally defined services<br>Local family service centers |
| 7 | Kennewick Advantage | Kennewick School District | 1 | Family service center<br>Service directory<br>Homework centers<br>Counseling and referral for teen parenting program |
| 8 | KIDS First | Renton School District | 1 | Family liaisons<br>Mentoring |
| 10 | Bridge Program | La Conner School District | 1 | Family advocate<br>Interagency team<br>Locally defined services<br>Service purchase fund |
| 11 | Family Community Services Network | Lynden School District | 1 | Community liaison<br>Locally defined services |
| 12 | Mason County Communities in Schools | Shelton School District | 7 | Home intervention specialists<br>Case management |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit 2 *(continued)*

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | No. of School Districts Served | Program Features |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Mid-Valley Providers Consortium | Toppenish School District | 5 | Case management |
| 14 | North Chelan–Douglas County Consortium of School Districts | Manson School District | 5 | Bilingual/bicultural home visitors<br>Individualized and tailored services<br>Community service center |
| 15 | Nooksack Valley Family Services | Nooksack Valley School District | 1 | Family service coordinator<br>Service purchase fund |
| 16 | Family Empowerment Project | Okanogan School District | 6 | Family empowerment specialists<br>Interagency CARE Team (Committee for Accessing Resource Enhancement)<br>Focuses on strengths |
| 17 | Project LOOK | Highline School District | 1 | After-school learning and resource center<br>Home visitors |
| 18 | Quillayute Valley Consortium | Quillayute Valley School District | 2 | Family service advocates<br>Interagency team<br>Teen parent shelter |
| 19 | Seattle Learn | Seattle Public Schools | 1 | Interagency team<br>School-defined group activities<br>Transition support<br>Service purchase fund |
| 20 | South Chelan–Douglas County | North Central ESD | 7 | Bilingual/bicultural family service workers<br>Wraparound intake and review committee<br>Case management |
| 21 | Stevens County RTL | ESD 101 | 15 | Family advocates<br>District interagency team |
| 22 | Success Through School Attendance | ESD 113 | 8 | Family advocates<br>Local service center<br>Family literacy program facilitator |
| 23 | Walla Walla County RTL | ESD 123 | 6 | Local resource manager<br>Locally defined activities |
| 24 | Washington Alliance | Everett School District | 4 | Family advocates<br>Locally defined activities<br>School-based services |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit 2 *(continued)*

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | No. of School Districts Served | Program Features |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | West Valley RTL | West Valley SD | 1 | Family advocates<br>School teams<br>Interagency teams<br>Focus on strengths |
| 26 | Whidbey Island RTL | South Whidbey SD | 3 | Family service advocates<br>Family teams<br>Community team<br>Service purchase fund |
| 27 | Family Information Centers | Bellingham SD | 1 | Family service centers<br>Parenting education |
| 28 | Blaine Partnership Family Service Center | Blaine SD | 1 | Family service center<br>Rainbow project for children |
| 29 | Family Empowerment Project | Ephrata SD | 3 | Family empowerment specialists<br>Case management |
| 30 | Granite Falls Family Services | Granite Falls SD | 1 | Family services worker<br>Case management |
| 31 | BOOTS | Hood Canal SD | 1 | Outdoor challenge program<br>Computer-assisted technical training |
| 32 | Lopez Family Resource Center | Lopez Island SD | 1 | Family advocates<br>Family and community teams<br>Community team<br>Parents lending library |
| 33 | Orcas Island Family Resource Center | Orcas Island SD | 1 | Family advocates<br>Social services broker<br>Individualized family plans |
| 34 | Shaw Middle School Community School Program | Spokane SD | 1 | After-school and summer programs to raise student achievement<br>Open gym<br>Student peer mediation groups |

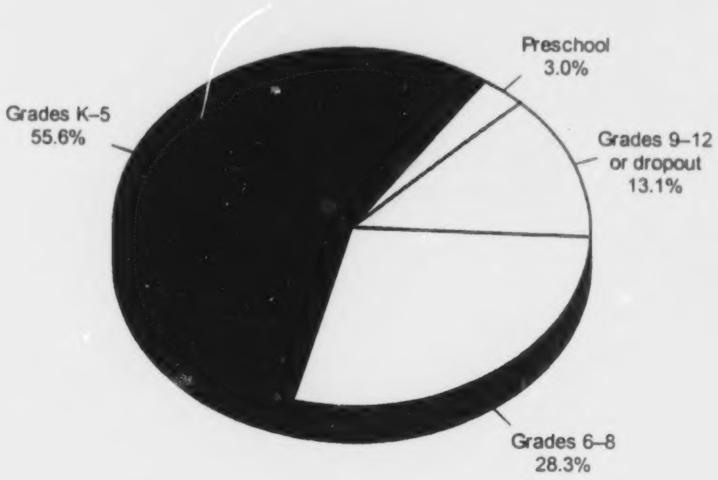
Additional details about the programs are provided in the appendix. Program summaries provided in Volume 2 of this report include a description of each program's consortium, its strategy for service delivery, and outcomes for its participants.

## Characteristics of Children Who Participate in Readiness to Learn

Readiness to Learn does not impose any specific eligibility requirements on program participants and most programs offer their services to any child or family who could benefit from services. The entering characteristics of children and families—for example, a child's age—contribute to differing program needs, service delivery strategies, and outcomes. Exhibits 3 through 5 present background characteristics of children who participated in Readiness to Learn in 1998–99.

Exhibit 3 presents the percentage of children served by grade level. Children in kindergarten through Grade 5 composed the majority (nearly 56 percent) of students who participated in Readiness to Learn in 1998–99. Over one-fourth (28 percent) of the students served were in middle school (Grades 6–8).

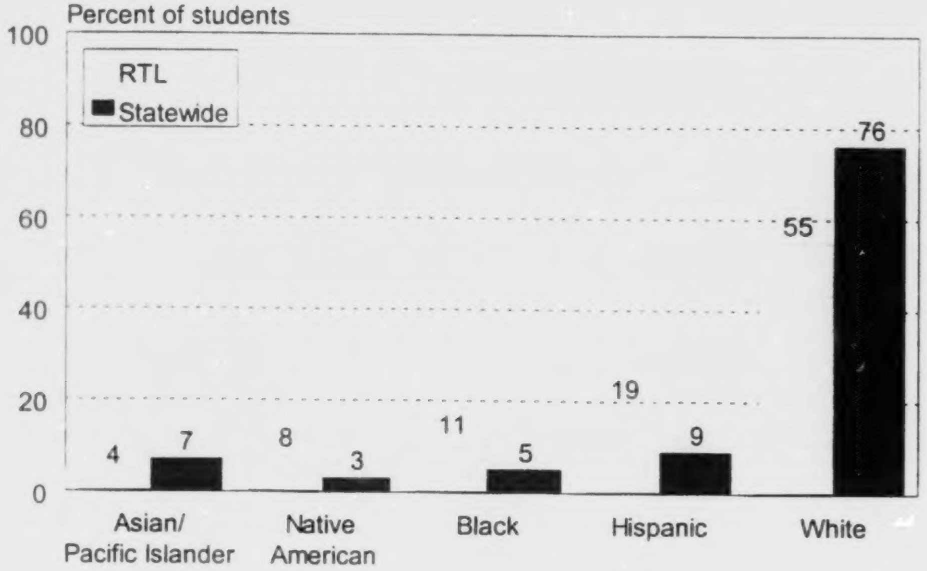
**Exhibit 3**
**Percentages of Students Served by Grade Level**



Children who participate in Readiness to Learn programs represent diverse racial and ethnic groups. The racial and ethnic distribution is compared to the distribution of all students in the state in Exhibit 4. Readiness to Learn programs served a higher proportion of students from minority groups than the state's overall distribution: 76 percent of all students in the state were white, whereas 55 percent of Readiness to Learn students were white.

**Exhibit 4**

**Race/Ethnic Distribution of Readiness to Learn Students Served Compared to Statewide**



Many of the children who receive Readiness to Learn services struggle academically, as evidenced by the proportion of students involved in special school-based programs (see Exhibit 5). Readiness to Learn programs served a higher percentage of students in Title I/Learning Assistance Program (LAP), bilingual education, and special education than the proportion of students involved in these programs statewide. In 1998–99, 20 percent of Readiness to Learn students were enrolled in Title I/LAP, 11 percent of Readiness to Learn students received bilingual education services, and 19 percent of Readiness to Learn students were in special education.

**Exhibit 5**

**Percentage of Readiness to Learn Students Involved in Other Special School Programs Compared to Statewide**

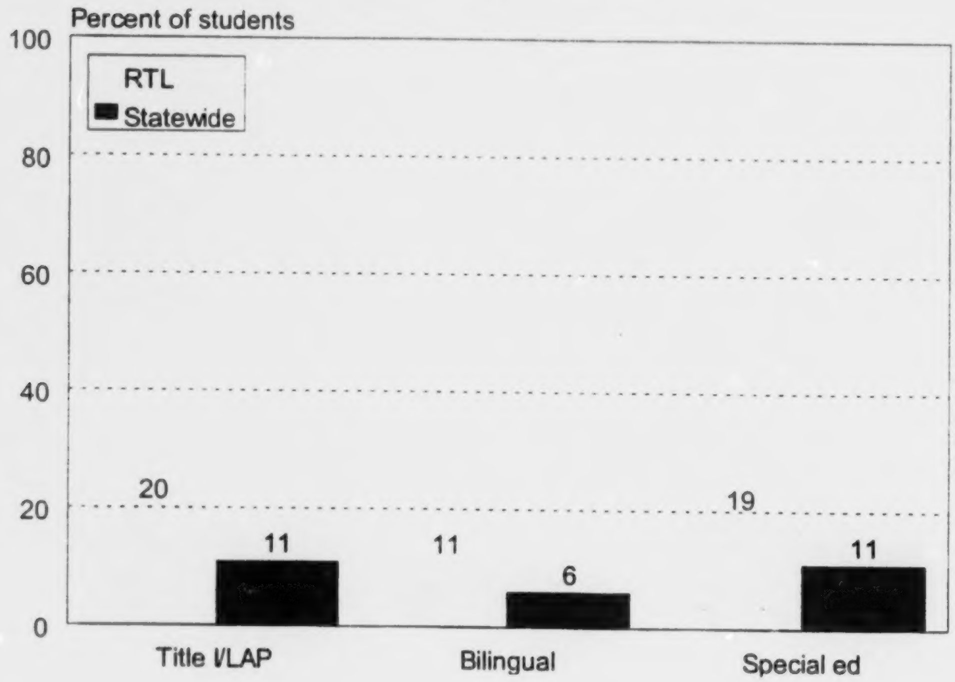


Exhibit 6 summarizes the characteristics of children served by Readiness to Learn during 1998–99. Thirty-nine percent of the children lived with both parents and about the same proportion of students (38 percent) lived with a single parent. Most of the rest of the children lived with a parent and a stepparent (12 percent) or relatives (7 percent).

**Exhibit 6**
**Characteristics of Children Served**

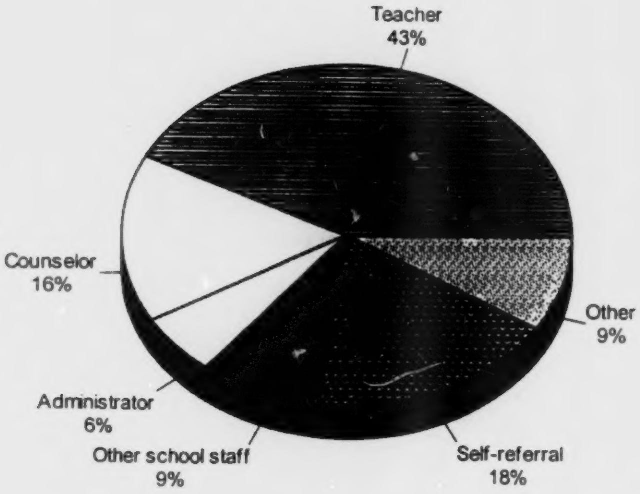
| Characteristic | No. of Children | Percent of Children Served |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (*n* = 4,767)** | | |
| Male | 2,448 | 52 |
| Female | 2,274 | 48 |
| **Grade level (*n* = 4,767)** | | |
| Pre–K | 156 | 3 |
| K–5 | 2597 | 55 |
| 6–8 | 1,344 | 28 |
| 9–12 | 632 | 13 |
| **Race/ethnicity (*n* = 4,727)** | | |
| White, not Hispanic | 2,620 | 55 |
| Hispanic | 897 | 19 |
| Black, not Hispanic | 529 | 11 |
| Native American | 392 | 8 |
| Multiethnic | 106 | 2 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 183 | 4 |
| **Participation in special programs: (*n* = 4,477)** | | |
| Special education | 873 | 19 |
| Title I/LAP | 911 | 20 |
| Bilingual education | 483 | 11 |
| Local program | 371 | 3 |
| None of above | 2,132 | 48 |
| **Living situation (*n* = 4,742)** | | |
| Both parents | 1,853 | 39 |
| Single parent | 1,820 | 38 |
| Parent and stepparent | 567 | 12 |
| Relatives | 322 | 7 |
| Foster care/out-of-home placement | 76 | 2 |
| Alone/friends/significant other | 44 | 1 |
| Other | 60 | 1 |

*Note.* Percentages do not sum to 100 because children may participate in multiple programs.

## Sources of Referrals and Reasons for Referrals to Readiness to Learn

Exhibit 7 presents sources of referrals to Readiness to Learn. Most student referrals in 1998–99 came from teachers, administrators, counselors, or other school staff (74 percent), or students self-referred (18 percent).

**Exhibit 7**
**Sources of Referrals for Students Served**



*Note.* Figures may not total 100% due to rounding.

Many children were referred to Readiness to Learn for multiple reasons, as illustrated in Exhibit 8. Academic problems were the most common reasons for referral (44 percent). Other reasons for referral included school behavior problems (29 percent), family problems (27 percent), unmet family basic needs (27 percent), low interest in school (22 percent), and poor school attendance (20 percent). Over half (55 percent) of the referrals to Readiness to Learn programs occurred during the fall semester. One-fourth of the students (24 percent) who received services during the 1998–99 school year began participating in Readiness to Learn during the 1997–98 school year.

### Exhibit 8
### Referral Information

| Characteristic | No. of Children | Percent of Children Referred |
|---|---|---|
| **Source of referral** (*n* = 4,732) | | |
| Teacher | 2,037 | 43 |
| Self | 851 | 18 |
| Counselor | 745 | 16 |
| Administrator | 279 | 6 |
| Other school staff | 404 | 9 |
| Service provider | 43 | 1 |
| Other | 278 | 6 |
| **Primary referral reason(s)** (*n* = **4,769**) | | |
| Academic problems | 2,092 | 44 |
| School behavior problems | 1,393 | 29 |
| Family problems | 1,307 | 27 |
| Family basic needs | 1,289 | 27 |
| Low interest in school | 1,045 | 22 |
| Poor attendance | 954 | 20 |
| Other mental health problems | 566 | 12 |
| Health needs | 699 | 15 |
| Limited English proficiency | 350 | 7 |
| Domestic safety concerns | 317 | 7 |
| Family substance abuse | 266 | 6 |
| Reported physical/sexual abuse | 170 | 4 |
| Reported substance abuse | 179 | 4 |
| Other | 953 | 20 |
| **Date of referral** (*n* = **4,619**) | | |
| 1997–98 school year | 1,116 | 24 |
| July 1998–January 1999 | 2,545 | 55 |
| February–June 1999 | 958 | 21 |

*Note.* Percentages do not sum to 100 because multiple reasons for referral were indicated for some children.

## Collaborative Partners Involved in Readiness to Learn Consortia

In 1998–99 the Readiness to Learn program funded 31 local consortia with decentralized, seamless service delivery systems that provided support and developmental opportunities for children and families in need. The Readiness to Learn program encouraged each consortium to involve local representatives from the five Washington State agencies responsible for the Family Policy Initiative: school districts; the Department of Social and

Health Services; the Department of Health; the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; and the Employment Security Department. The other school-linked and community-based programs and agencies involved in local consortia varied by community. On average, 23 partners collaborated in the local consortia (the actual numbers ranged from 9 to 42 partners, depending on the community size).

Local consortia ranked the level of involvement of the five Family Policy Initiative agencies on a scale of 1 (*minimal involvement*) to 5 (*high involvement*) and indicated whether or not they had a formal interagency agreement with the agency (see Exhibit 9). Consortia reported the highest level of involvement among school districts, which rated an average score of 4.9, and 22 consortia confirmed having a formal interagency agreement with school districts. The Department of Health was also highly involved in local consortia (receiving an average score of 4.3) and had a formal agreement with 15 consortia. The average score for level of involvement from the Department of Social and Health Services was 4.2 and this agency had a formal agreement with 17 consortia. Local consortia reported a moderate level of involvement by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and the Department of Employment Security.

**Exhibit 9**
**Level of Involvement**

| Family Policy Initiative Agency | Level of Involvement (average score) | No. of Consortia With Formal Interagency Agreement[a] |
|---|---|---|
| School districts | 4.9 | 22 |
| Department of Health | 4.3 | 15 |
| Department of Social and Health Services | 4.2 | 17 |
| Community, Trade and Economic Development | 3.5 | 8 |
| Employment Security Department | 2.9 | 14 |

[a] Based on responses from 29 consortia.

Each consortium included other local providers of services to children and families. All of the consortia reported involvement from mental health agencies, and many indicated involvement from community family services providers, particularly Catholic Family

Services. Institutions of higher learning (universities, community colleges, or technical colleges) collaborated with over half of the Readiness to Learn consortia. Law enforcement partnered with about one-third of the consortia. Many consortia included representatives from local Native American tribes. Crisis service agencies, including those that address domestic violence and rape, were involved with many consortia, as were community health and safety networks and juvenile justice centers. The medical community was represented on several consortia through a children's hospital, a medical center, a community health clinic, a nursing school, and a dental coalition. Several consortia also collaborated with local libraries and family literacy programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, and reading centers. A few consortia involved partners from interfaith associations, educational service districts (ESDs), the housing authority, the opportunity council, the parks and recreation districts, the private industry council, parent associations, Goodwill or the Salvation Army, local transit organizations, the United Way, and the YMCA. Other consortia also included agencies or programs such as the Boys and Girls Club, Campfire, the Commission on Children, Child Protective Services, child care programs, neighborhood centers, volunteer centers, and the YWCA.

Each consortium asked members to fulfill certain responsibilities to the Readiness to Learn project. As Exhibit 10 shows, all of the consortia that responded asked members to attend consortium meetings. Nearly all consortia asked member agencies to receive referrals as part of their responsibilities to the Readiness to Learn project. Most consortium members also served as sources of referrals to other services. In addition, most consortia required members to participate in planning activities and about half asked members to participate in consortium fundraising activities. Other member responsibilities included facilitating consortium meetings, disseminating information, working with legislative groups, and developing policies.

## Exhibit 10
## Consortium Members' Responsibilities

| Responsibility | No. of Consortia Requiring Responsibility[a] |
|---|---|
| Attend consortium meetings | 29 |
| Recipient of referrals | 28 |
| Source of referrals | 27 |
| Participate in planning consortium activities | 27 |
| Participate in interagency staffing | 21 |
| Participate in consortium fundraising activities | 15 |
| Other | 9 |

[a] Based on responses from 29 consortia.

# What Are the Services Children and Families Receive?

Readiness to Learn programs in Washington provide a wide range of services to meet the educational, health, and family functioning needs of the children and families they serve. Program staff recorded the services they provided to children, parents, or families on new reporting forms for the 1998–99 school year. Previously, programs had used separate forms to document services to families and to children. However, Readiness to Learn program coordinators have repeatedly indicated that often more than one child in a family benefits from services targeted to either a single child or the family as a whole. Thus a new data collection system was implemented by which child and family services and outcomes were recorded on a single form. As a result, some results, such as the count of families and children served, are not directly comparable to counts from previous years. In 1998–99, a total of 4,223 families received services through Washington's Readiness to Learn Program, and a total of 4,983 children were served three or more times.

## Family Service Utilization

***Finding: As reported in 1997–98, families usually participated in more than one service. Eighty-three percent of the families took part in Readiness to Learn services related to the education of their children, such as student advocacy, behavior interventions, tutoring, and academic counseling. Forty-three percent of the families participated in activities designed to increase their involvement in the education of their children. Meeting basic needs and improving family functioning were also important areas of service to over 50 percent of the families.***

Exhibit 11 shows the six areas of service Readiness to Learn provided to families and children. Families usually received services in more than one category and more than one member of the family may have benefited from each service.

## Exhibit 11
## Service Utilization by Families During 1998–99

| Service | Number of Individuals Who Received Services | Number of Families That Received Services | Percentage of Families That Received Services | Percentage of Services Provided Directly |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education of child (*n* = 3,487 families)** | | | | |
| Student advocacy | 2,107 | 1,723 | 40 | 80 |
| Behavior interventions | 1,797 | 1,448 | 34 | 78 |
| Academic counseling | 1,418 | 1,232 | 28 | 75 |
| Tutoring | 1,351 | 1,220 | 28 | 67 |
| After-school/evening activities | 1,732 | 1,184 | 27 | 64 |
| Adult/peer mentors | 1,266 | 1,094 | 25 | 80 |
| Peer support groups | 1,043 | 875 | 20 | 79 |
| School supplies or fees | 1,214 | 836 | 19 | 62 |
| Summer activities | 1,051 | 717 | 16 | 44 |
| Alternative school program | 652 | 542 | 13 | 54 |
| Early childhood education | 297 | 221 | 5 | 57 |
| Other education | 15 | 10 | < 1 | 70 |
| **Basic needs (*n* = 2,358 families)** | | | | |
| School lunch or breakfast | 1,679 | 1,084 | 25 | 61 |
| Holiday food/gift basket | 3,247 | 907 | 21 | 53 |
| Clothing assistance | 2,097 | 839 | 19 | 59 |
| Food assistance | 2,492 | 653 | 15 | 42 |
| Transportation to appointment | 1,052 | 605 | 14 | 68 |
| Housing | 1,342 | 402 | 9 | 19 |
| Legal assistance | 496 | 298 | 7 | 18 |
| Translation | 551 | 253 | 6 | 68 |
| Public assistance | 648 | 223 | 5 | 12 |
| Childcare | 278 | 174 | 4 | 21 |
| Other basic needs | 26 | 9 | < 1 | 67 |
| **Parent Involvement (*n* = 1,824 families)** | | | | |
| Parent/child involvement | 1,809 | 912 | 21 | 65 |
| Parent/school involvement | 1,529 | 901 | 20 | 59 |
| Parenting education | 1,023 | 835 | 18 | 55 |
| Parent support groups/mentors | 709 | 527 | 12 | 45 |
| Behavior management training | 673 | 469 | 11 | 65 |
| Other parent involvement | 5 | 4 | < 1 | 50 |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit 11 (*continued*)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Family functioning/mental health (*n* = 2,272 families)** | | | | |
| Child counseling | 2,277 | 1,810 | 41 | 64 |
| Parent counseling | 910 | 738 | 17 | 58 |
| Family counseling | 1,639 | 658 | 14 | 29 |
| Alcohol/drug counseling—child | 240 | 241 | 5 | 39 |
| Alcohol/drug counseling—parent | 120 | 106 | 2 | 12 |
| Other family counseling | 298 | 201 | 4 | 54 |
| **Health (*n* = 1,543 families)** | | | | |
| Screenings | 870 | 640 | 15 | 58 |
| Other medical care | 706 | 475 | 11 | 21 |
| Insurance | 965 | 431 | 10 | 18 |
| Nutritional counseling | 548 | 305 | 7 | 80 |
| Dental care | 541 | 294 | 7 | 21 |
| Correct hearing/vision | 309 | 236 | 5 | 30 |
| Immunizations | 273 | 172 | 4 | 34 |
| Other health services | 308 | 224 | 5 | 61 |
| **Employment/adult education (*n* = 482 families)** | | | | |
| Vocational counseling/placement | 281 | 265 | 6 | 23 |
| Adult education | 134 | 128 | 3 | 24 |
| English-as-a-second language | 133 | 106 | 2 | 8 |
| Other employment/adult education | 103 | 97 | 2 | 68 |

*Note.* Total number of families served = 4,223.

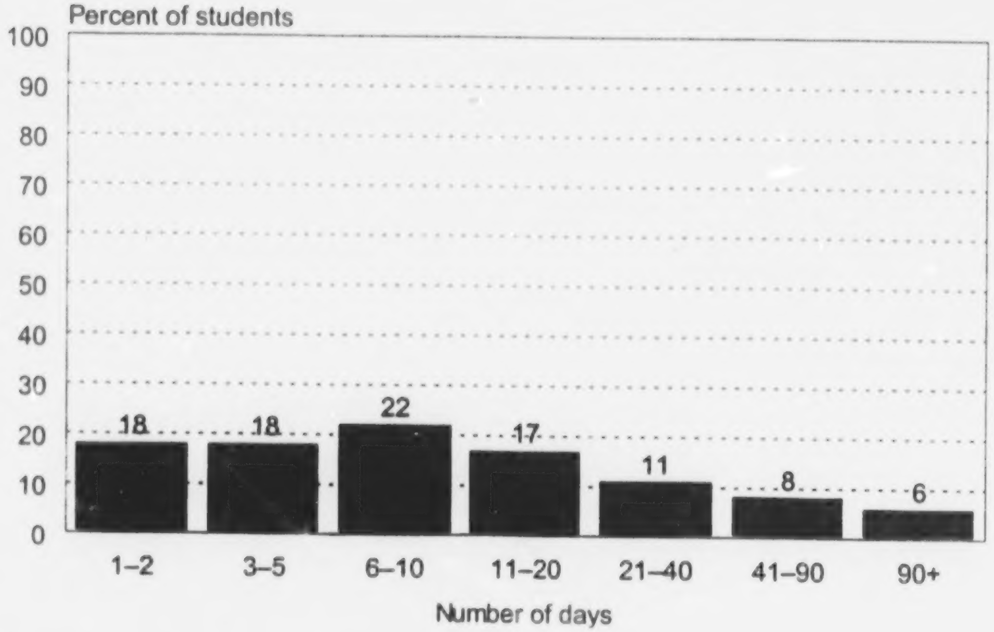
- The largest number of families (3,487) received services directed toward the education of their children. Readiness to Learn programs provided between 44 and 80 percent of the services related to the education of the child directly or through Readiness to Learn funds. Forty percent of the families who received services in this category received services in the area of student advocacy and 34 percent of families also received the benefit of behavior interventions on behalf of their children. Even more individual children within those families benefited from student advocacy (2,107 individuals in 1,723 families). Twenty-eight percent of the families received tutoring, 28 percent received academic counseling, and 27 percent participated in after-school or evening activities.
- A total of 2,358 families received help meeting basic needs, such as food and clothing, housing, and transportation. The largest number of individuals benefited

from holiday food and gifts, followed by food and clothing assistance. Although only 9 percent of the families received assistance with housing or shelter, 1,342 individuals benefited from this service. Readiness to Learn programs directly provided translation and transportation assistance to 68 percent of the families who received help with basic needs.

- A total of 1,824 families received services to increase their involvement in their children's school and education or to improve their parenting skills. A total of 912 families (21 percent) and 1,809 individuals benefited from services to involve parents in their children's education. A total of 1,023 individuals in 835 families (18 percent) took part in parent education programs, and 673 individuals in 469 families (11 percent) received assistance with managing the behavior of their children.
- A total of 2,272 families received services related to family functioning. A total of 2,277 individuals in 1,810 families (41 percent) received child counseling services. Another 17 percent received parent counseling, and 14 percent participated in family counseling. Sixty-four percent of the child counseling services and 58 percent of the parent counseling services were provided directly by Readiness to Learn. Usually, staff referred families to other agencies for family counseling services. For example, of those families who received family counseling services, 71 percent were referred to other agencies for service.
- A total of 482 families received employment services, adult education vocational assistance, or English-as-a-second language instruction. In most instances, Readiness to Learn staff linked families to services provided by other agencies.

Families nearly always became involved with Readiness to Learn because one or more of their children were referred to Readiness to Learn by a member of the school staff. Readiness to Learn programs intensively served 4,983 students (i.e., served the students three or more times) during 1998–99. Of these students, records of the number of days students were served were kept for 4,009 students. Exhibit 12 shows a frequency distribution of the number of days Readiness to Learn staff worked with students to address their identified needs. On average, Readiness to Learn staff worked 21.8 days with each student. At the end of the year, programs reported having completed their work with 31 percent (1,237) of the students, continuing to work with 49 percent (1,941), and having discontinued work with another 16 percent (623) either because the students had moved or transferred (11 percent) or declined further participation (5 percent).

**Exhibit 12**
**Number of Days Readiness to Learn Staff Worked With Students**



***Finding: Readiness to Learn staff provided a higher percentage of direct services in the areas of child education, parent involvement, parent education, transportation to appointments, and translation services than in other areas.***

Readiness to Learn programs provided direct services and linked or referred families and children to services available through other programs or agencies in the community. Exhibit 11 includes a column that shows the percentage of families Readiness to Learn linked to services and the percentage to which Readiness to Learn provided direct services. Direct services include making follow-ups with the families served, conducting needs assessments for the families, and developing family service plans. One of the most satisfying experiences cited by Readiness to Learn staff was observing families learning how to access services for themselves and becoming more self-sufficient.

> ***Finding: Typically, Readiness to Learn staff linked or referred families to the services they needed either by providing information or by making referrals. They most often referred families for basic needs, health, and counseling services.***

Readiness to Learn consortia fostered collaborative efforts with school staff, used social service interns from area colleges, and used AmeriCorps volunteers to meet the needs of children and families. This practice resulted in less clear distinctions between Readiness to Learn services and those provided by other agencies. In some cases, tutors, district or school health service personnel, and other staff were unable to separate their services under Readiness to Learn from responsibilities under other programs. Although this difficulty might have somewhat inflated the percentage of direct services reported as provided through Readiness to Learn, the situation also shows the extent to which Readiness to Learn partnered with other agencies to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that family and child needs were met.

For example, Readiness to Learn programs have taken the lead in bringing before- and after-school care and advocacy for domestic violence prevention to their communities, but have not always assumed total responsibility for providing staff or programs. In some areas the Readiness to Learn program is an integral part of a team implementing early intervention and prevention programs for child abuse and neglect and also provides curriculum for teachers in social skills and violence reduction strategies. In other cases, some Readiness to Learn staff serve directly as key school staff in dealing with truancy issues while other staff in the same program are on the truancy advisory board for their districts but do not provide direct services.

## Group Service Utilization

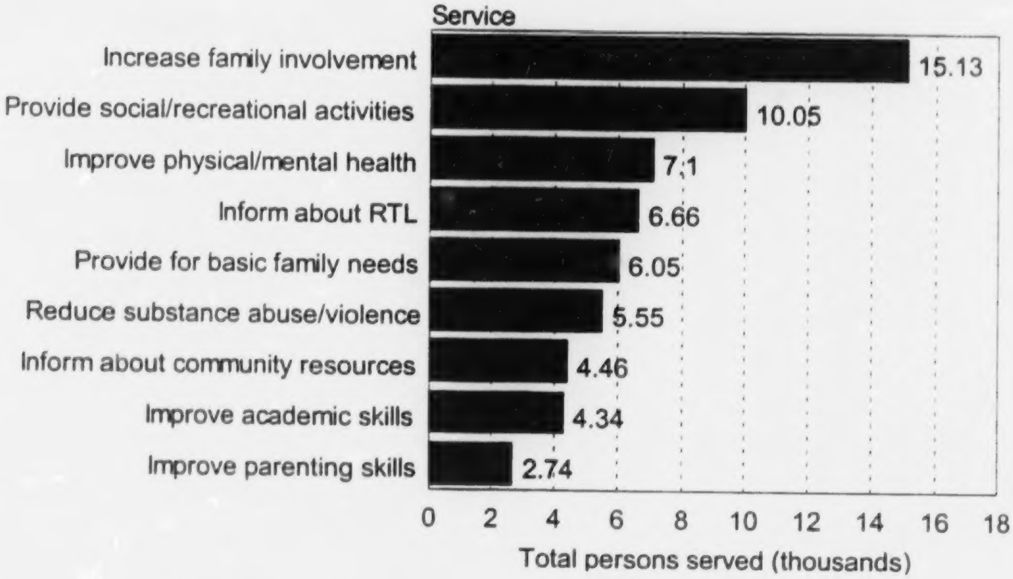
> **Finding:** ***Readiness to Learn group services with the greatest number of participants in 1998–99 included activities to increase family involvement, provide social and recreational activities, improve physical or mental health, provide information about Readiness to Learn, provide for basic family needs, or reduce substance abuse or violence. Activities were often prevention-oriented rather than intervention-oriented.***

Most Readiness to Learn programs provided a variety of informational, educational, and social activities to groups of community members, families, parents, and children. Most of these activities were designed to improve the quality of family or community life or to reduce or prevent problems. Group activities included health fairs, character education classes, parenting classes, open school gym nights, summer programs, violence prevention classes, substance abuse prevention programs, homework clubs, and staff training programs to increase intercultural understanding and reduce prejudice. Some programs included more than one of the categories.

For example, Family Night Out, offered in both 1997–1998 and 1998–99 in Stevens County, has been a very well-attended program that brings isolated rural families together for a potluck supper followed by either a recreational activity, a speaker on issues of importance to families, or both. Several other programs, including West Valley, reported holding Family Night Out programs in 1998–99.

Group services were divided into nine categories based on the primary purpose of the activities. Exhibit 13 details the number of participants in each type of activity. Individual participants might have taken part in multiple activities and thus be counted more than once. In 1998–99, 62,071 people participated in 1,006 Readiness to Learn group activities (this is a duplicated count because an individual may have participated in more than one activity), an increase of over 10,000 participants over the previous school year. The largest number of participants engaged in activities that increased family involvement in their children's education (a total of 15,125 people participating in 117 activities). The second largest number enjoyed social and recreational activities (a total of 10,046 people participating in 141 activities). Services to meet basic family needs, improve physical and mental health, or reduce substance abuse and violence also attracted large numbers of participants.

**Exhibit 13**
**Focus of Group Services**



*Note.* Counts are duplicated because an individual may be counted for each activity, even within the same category.

Violence prevention and conflict resolution activities were provided by Readiness to Learn group activities, consistent with concern about violence in Washington State. The Quillayute Readiness to Learn program wrote a grant to fund a full-time police officer at the high school. Since the elementary and middle school campuses are close to each other, all schools benefited from his presence. The officer taught self-defense and substance abuse prevention classes and his presence in the schools resulted in quicker response on the part of the police to calls from the school.

# To What Extent Do Services Meet Child and Family Needs?

> ***Finding: Readiness to Learn programs assess individual family needs and provide a variety of services tailored to meet those needs. Programs follow-up with varying frequency depending on the families' situations.***

Readiness to Learn programs typically conduct either a formal or an informal assessment of needs and assets when they begin working with a child or family. Of the 29 Readiness to Learn coordinators who responded to the 1998–99 survey of coordinators, 13 reported that their programs conduct a formal assessment of family needs and assets at intake. Twenty-four coordinators, including some of those who use formal assessments, reported gathering information about family needs and strengths informally by interviewing family members. Programs also reportedly use information from school counselors and teachers, input from referral sources, and staff observations to determine the services a family needs. One program also conducted a formal community needs assessment survey.

RTL staff reported reviewing family progress at different intervals, depending on the situation. Seven programs reported reviewing progress at a weekly staffing session, two programs review progress daily, and six programs review progress monthly. Some programs indicated beginning with a daily progress review and then moving to weekly and monthly reviews as the children and families progress toward meeting their needs.

Programs usually reported involving families and children in various services to address their needs. Exhibits 14 through 17 illustrate the numbers of families who received services in each category. The largest number of families received services related to their child's education. The second largest number participated in services related to family functioning, followed by those who received assistance related to meeting their basic needs. Behavior intervention and student advocacy for children in school and before- and after-school activities, child counseling, and school breakfasts or lunches were the most frequently provided services in 1998–99. The previous school year, families most often received services in child behavior management and personal counseling, as well as parenting education, parent and child involvement, and parent involvement in school.

**Exhibit 14**
**Number of Families That Participated in Education of Child Services**

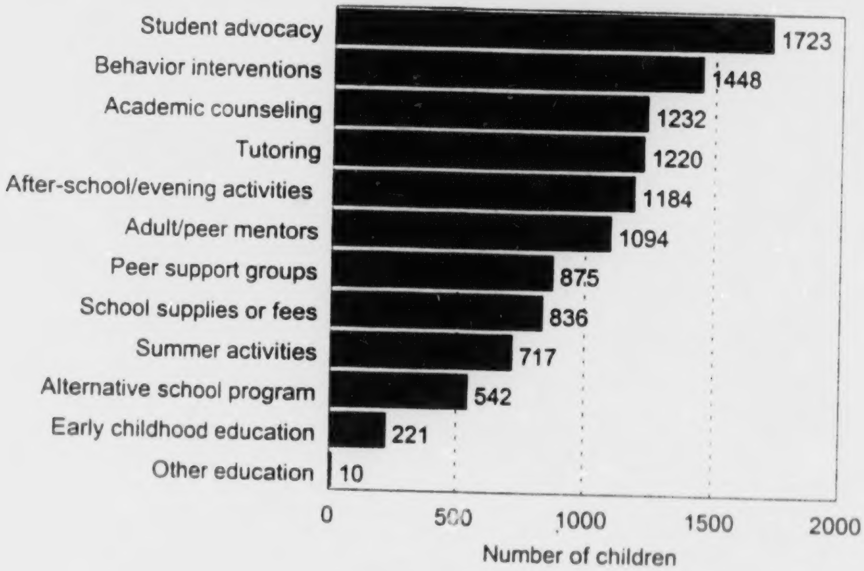
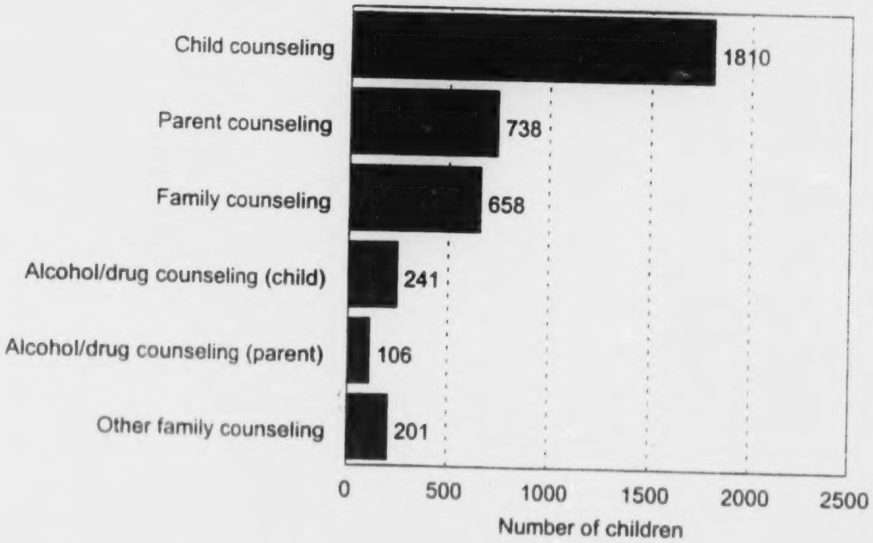
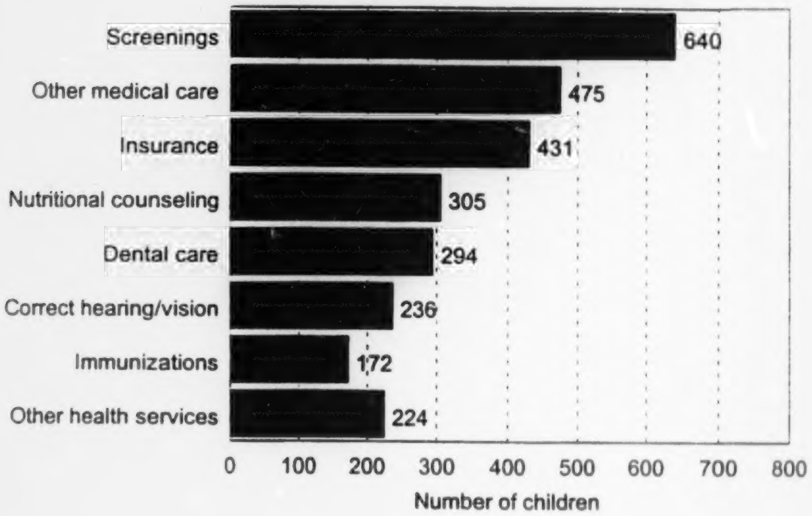


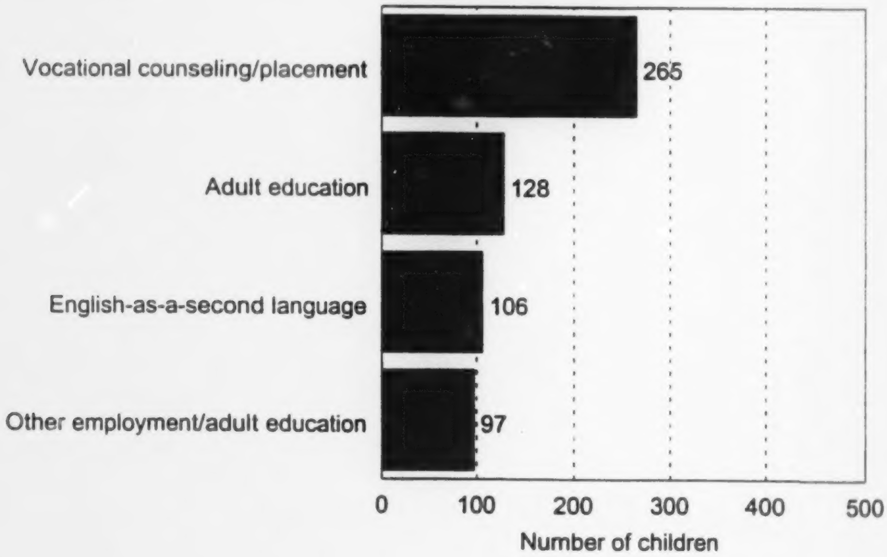
**Exhibit 15**
**Number of Families That Participated in Family Functioning Services**



## Exhibit 16
## Number of Families That Participated in Health Services



## Exhibit 17
## Number of Families That Participated in Employment/Adult Education Services



Prior to 1998–99, Readiness to Learn programs evaluated the extent to which Readiness to Learn services met the needs of the families they served in the course of the school year. Determining whether families' needs had been met was difficult because most Readiness to Learn families and children suffer the effects of poverty and attendant social problems, which are difficult to overcome during a single school year (i.e., the time period covered by the annual evaluation). To better assess the impact of Readiness to Learn services on families, the evaluators, in consultation with program staff, devised reporting forms that enabled programs to report the progress they observed families making in relation to addressing specific areas of need. Beginning in 1998–99, programs reported the number of individuals and families that showed improved skills, behaviors, or other outcomes related to the categories of services programs provided. Often, several outcomes resulted from more than one service in each broad category. For example, under the category of parent involvement, behavior management training and parenting education may have resulted in an improved response of a parent to a child, as well as improved parenting skills and increased involvement with the child's schoolwork. All of these outcomes contribute to the overall goal of helping children enter school ready to learn and address categories of family needs that may impede that readiness. Program reports showed that not every family that received services in a specific category demonstrated a related outcome, yet some families showed improvement in more than one outcome category.

Another way of considering whether or not family needs have been met by Readiness to Learn services is to examine the numbers of families and children that programs considered to have completed program participation. Of the 3,947 intensively served children for whom end-of-year status was available, 1,941 (49 percent) were still participating in Readiness to Learn services. Another 16 percent discontinued services before their needs could be met, either because they moved out of the area, transferred to a different school, or declined further participation. Thirty-one percent of the students or families completed the plans or goals they had established with Readiness to Learn, indicating that their needs had been met. These results reflect the complexity of family needs and the nature of the desired outcomes, which usually involve a long-term process of improvement in skills, behaviors, and circumstances. Such outcomes are difficult to measure, especially in the short-term.

## Family Satisfaction With Readiness to Learn Services

Readiness to Learn programs were requested to select a systematic sample of 20 percent of the families they served to be interviewed by someone other than their Readiness to Learn service provider. A total of 452 families were surveyed (11 percent of the total number served) regarding their degree of satisfaction with the assistance they received through the program. Overall, families were quite satisfied with the services (the overall average rating was 3.82 on a 4-point scale). Seventy-five percent of the respondents were very satisfied with the amount of help they had received through Readiness to Learn. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they would *definitely* recommend the program to their friends, and 88 percent reported that they would again ask the program for help if in need. Three-fourths (73 percent) of the respondents stated that they thought their children would *definitely* do better in school because of the help they had received, and 24 percent reported that their children would *probably* do better in school.

> ***Finding: Interviewed families were very satisfied with the services they had received and appreciated that these services had been tailored to their needs and delivered with respect and sensitivity. Families also indicated that the services had empowered them to identify and seek out help in the future.***

Family members commented on the type and quality of services they had received. Interviewers asked about the kinds of services the families had received, the aspects of the services the families appreciated most, what the Readiness to Learn could have done to be more helpful, and what families had learned from the experience that will help them when they need assistance in the future. Interviewees were generally very appreciative of the personalized services they had received. They also appreciated the sensitivity and respect with which they were treated. One parent, who met with Readiness to Learn staff ten times, reported that Readiness to Learn staff had helped her "with a messy process at DSHS" and remarked, "My son has had a mentor in the past. [Readiness to Learn] also helped with transportation troubles. I've never felt like I had to check my integrity at the door, like at other services. They do this because they care." Another parent, who had received 30 contacts, reported that her child had been provided with a mentor three times a month. This parent said, "My daughter opens up to [the mentor]" and expressed appreciation for the advice she had received from Readiness to Learn. She observed, "[Readiness to Learn staff] are educated in dealing with things that a lot of parents don't know about."

Respondents who had received help with family communication and child behavior concerns offered very positive comments. One parent indicated that her family's 12 contacts with Readiness to Learn had helped the family "cope with each other." This parent said, "We have learned to understand one another and develop positive communication. [We now] know that other people deal with similar problems in their lives . . . [and it puts us at ease to realize] not all children are perfect." Another parent, who met 25 times with Readiness to Learn staff, reported that the program had helped her child become "more comfortable in group settings, better at interacting with older adults, and better with other adults' supervision." She said, "[Readiness to Learn staff told us] what we needed [to hear] rather than what we wanted to hear. We received good direction to change our parenting behavior."

Many respondents commented that they appreciated that the program had provided them with the skills they need to address their problems more effectively. For example, a parent who had received help coping with her daughter's behavior problems at school and at home reported learning "better ways to discipline and to get information from" her daughter and developing skills that help her better understand her child. This parent said, "[Readiness to Learn staff] were very patient and more than willing to answer all my questions, which made it possible for me to help my daughter."

Most respondents offered no suggestions for ways that Readiness to Learn could be more helpful, but a few parents requested more frequent communication from the program regarding their children. One parent asked for clearer definitions on questionnaires regarding staff designations or types of services (i.e., help with program jargon) and a few expressed a desire that group activities be scheduled at different times. A few parents expressed frustration with the counseling. For example, one parent said, "My girls love and care about [the Readiness to Learn staff member]. She has helped so much. I just wish the counseling could go faster." Another parent reported that Readiness to Learn should have provided her children with more counseling sessions earlier. This parent may have benefited more from family counseling services. Another parent was frustrated when a field trip was cancelled because only a few families were interested in participating. She said, "I was disappointed when I made the effort to go and others did not show. I wish we would go no matter how many kids came."

One of the goals of Readiness to Learn is to provide families with the ability to identify and solve problems on their own. Commenting on what they had learned that would help them obtain assistance in the future, many parents said that they had more knowledge of available resources and how to access those resources. Others said they that learned help is available but that sometimes one has to persist to access that help. One single parent indicated that she had learned "where, what, and how to take care of myself and therefore model for my child how to navigate through the real world." Another parent commented, "I learned about my own skills and gained confidence to approach problems." Several parents mentioned learning that there are people at school who care, have resources, and are willing to help. Families are sometimes reluctant to ask for help, feeling that they need to manage on their own. One such family member indicated a change of attitude, saying, "I'm a little more open to the concept of asking for help rather than dealing with it at home." Another parent remarked that he had learned "to think of asking for help sooner rather than later, finding a balance between support and dependence."

The results presented in this chapter provide evidence that Readiness to Learn programs meet the needs of the families they serve and provide them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to access resources and solve problems on their own. Many families do, however, require multiple services and contacts over an extended period of time to reach that level of functioning.

## Unmet Needs for Services

Readiness to Learn coordinators were asked to indicate needs in their communities or school districts that they or their collaborators had been unable to meet. The most commonly cited areas of unmet need were affordable housing (reported by 10 programs), affordable mental health counseling (reported by 9 programs), and transportation (reported by 7 programs). Other frequently mentioned needs that Readiness to Learn had been unable to meet included jobs that yield a living wage, affordable child care for working parents, short-term financial assistance, money for major dental work, and respite care for single parents or primary caregivers.

Several unmet needs mentioned by only one or two programs reflected concerns distinct to their particular regions. For example, some program coordinators mentioned issues such as homelessness or the need for case management services for parents with mental health and chemical dependency issues. Some unmet needs were more common to rural areas where few social service agencies are available to meet basic needs such as food or adequate housing or to provide specialized services such as counseling and crisis response for children.

# What Impact Do Services Have on Children and Families?

Ultimately, the Readiness to Learn program is judged by the impact it has on the lives of the children it serves and, in particular, how these children improve in school. The program must demonstrate having met families' and children's educational, social, and health needs that interfere with success in school. Readiness to Learn must also show that the success of children in school has improved over time as a result of program participation. This chapter describes the impact of the Readiness to Learn program on families and on children during the 1998–99 school year based on data submitted by program staff in June 1999.

## Family Outcomes

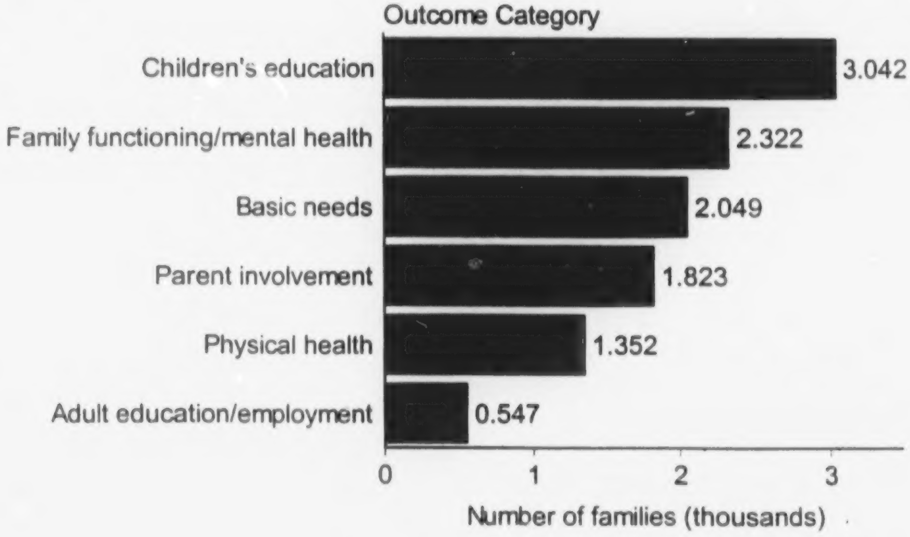
> **Finding:** ***Program staff reported at least one outcome for most participating families. Outcomes ranged from the fulfillment of immediate needs to longer-term solutions. Nearly three-fourths (72 percent) of the families reported an outcome related to children's performance in school or parent involvement in children's education. Over one-half (54 percent) of families reported an outcome related to mental health or family functioning. Just under one-half (49 percent) of families reported an outcome related to meeting basic needs.***

Many families experience difficulties accessing the services they need to ensure that their children arrive at school safe, healthy, and ready to learn. By implementing family-oriented strategies to directly improve access to services and by making fundamental changes in the service delivery system, Readiness to Learn programs expected to observe increased utilization of services among participating families in 1998–99. Through participation in these services, families could achieve the goals they had identified with the support of the program. For example, parents might become more involved with their children's education, strengthen their parenting skills, or resolve mental health concerns. Families *might find more appropriate housing, obtain needed health care, or become economically* self-sufficient.

The evaluation team developed a coding scheme to facilitate the reporting of family accomplishments beginning in 1997–98. Because of the wide range of possible family outcomes, prior to 1997–98 program staff provided brief narrative descriptions of the family accomplishments that could be attributed directly to the assistance of Readiness to Learn. Under the new reporting system, used again in 1998–99, program staff simply marked on coding forms the statements that best described the outcomes achieved for each family.

Exhibit 18 organizes the outcomes into nine categories adapted from a framework suggested by Young, Gardner, Coley, Schorr, and Bruner (1994) and lists the numbers of families who reportedly achieved each outcome. Nearly three-fourths (72 percent) of the families reported an outcome related to children's performance in school or parent involvement in children's education. Over one-half (54 percent) of families reported an outcome related to mental health or family functioning. Just under one-half (49 percent) of families reported an outcome related to meeting basic needs.

**Exhibit 18**
**Number of Family Outcomes**



New reporting forms in 1998–99 provided a place for Readiness to Learn program staff to indicate outcomes of the services they provided in each category. As program staff had anticipated, the number of family members who experienced positive outcomes exceeded the number of families served by Readiness to Learn. A high percentage of the families served experienced positive outcomes as a result of the services provided. Eighty-seven percent of the families that received services related to their children's education experienced positive outcomes, and all but one family experienced improvements in relation to their involvement in their children's school or education. More families experienced positive outcomes in relation to adult education and employment than received services in that area.

Fifty-six percent of the families served received assistance meeting basic needs. In all cases, assistance to these families benefited far more individuals than families. For example, although 827 families received food assistance (15 percent of the families served), a total of 3,199 individuals achieved an outcome related to meeting this basic need. A total of 855 families and 2,256 individuals received help with clothing needs, and 558 families and 1,029 individuals received transportation assistance. Help in obtaining medical care was the greatest benefit to the 1,352 families that achieved outcomes related to health services (88 percent of the families that received health services), including medical check-ups (12 percent of the families) and medical care (11 percent of the families).

More families showed outcomes in family functioning/mental health than received services in that category, perhaps because services related to children's or parents' education, such as behavior intervention, mentoring, and parenting skills training, also impact family functioning. Thirty percent of the families demonstrated improved self-esteem, 29 percent demonstrated improved social skills, 29 percent demonstrated improved social support, 28 percent demonstrated improved coping skills, 27 percent became better able to express their feelings, 27 percent demonstrated better school behavior, and 24 percent experienced improved family communication. Exhibit 19 shows that the numbers of families that experienced positive outcomes in the areas of education and mental health are greater than in the areas of health and basic needs, probably reflecting the areas of strength of Readiness to Learn programs.

### Exhibit 19
### Outcomes Achieved by Families and Children Through Readiness to Learn Services

| Service | Number of Individuals Who Achieved Outcome | Number of Families That Achieved Outcome | Percent of Total Families Served (n = 4,223) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Education of Child (*n* = 3,042 families)** | | | |
| Enrolled in preschool | 174 | 129 | 3 |
| Improved educational plan | 1,657 | 1,414 | 33 |
| Improve academic skills | 1,673 | 1,448 | 34 |
| Success in alternative school program | 558 | 457 | 11 |
| Improved attendance | 990 | 822 | 19 |
| Improved school behavior | 1,706 | 1,496 | 35 |
| Returned to school | 266 | 215 | 5 |
| Graduated from high school | 116 | 110 | 3 |
| Involved in positive activities | 1,842 | 1,456 | 34 |
| **Basic needs (*n* = 2,049 families)** | | | |
| Obtained food assistance | 3,199 | 827 | 20 |
| Obtained free/reduced lunch | 1,496 | 938 | 22 |
| Obtained clothing assistance | 2,256 | 855 | 20 |
| Obtained transportation | 1,029 | 558 | 13 |
| Obtained child care | 240 | 142 | 3 |
| Obtained public assistance | 541 | 180 | 4 |
| Obtained legal assistance | 422 | 243 | 6 |
| Obtained translation assistance | 551 | 234 | 6 |
| Obtain transitional housing | 438 | 143 | 3 |
| Obtained permanent housing | 606 | 172 | 4 |
| **Parent involvement (*n* = 1,823 families)** | | | |
| Improved response to child | 1,173 | 920 | 22 |
| Increased involvement with child's schoolwork | 1,130 | 801 | 19 |
| Increased school involvement | 1,416 | 1,048 | 25 |
| Improved parenting skills | 962 | 750 | 18 |
| Increased cooperation with school | 1,453 | 1,117 | 26 |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit 19 *(continued)*

| Service | Number of Individuals Who Achieved Outcome | Number of Families That Achieved Outcome | Percent of Total Families Served (n = 4,223) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Family functioning/mental health (*n* = 2,322 families)** | | | |
| Improved family communication | 2,322 | 1,002 | 24 |
| Improved communication with providers | 1,435 | 766 | 18 |
| Improved home behavior | 1,158 | 683 | 16 |
| Improved domestic safety | 697 | 301 | 7 |
| Removed from abusive situation | 233 | 120 | 3 |
| Improved school behavior | 1,361 | 1,155 | 27 |
| Involved in positive activities | 1,530 | 1,044 | 25 |
| Improved anger management | 885 | 726 | 17 |
| Reduced depression | 794 | 654 | 16 |
| Improved self-esteem | 1,611 | 1,268 | 30 |
| Improved social skills | 1,544 | 1,232 | 29 |
| Improved social support | 1,930 | 1,231 | 29 |
| Improved coping skills | 1,523 | 1,165 | 28 |
| Better able to express feelings | 1,503 | 1,155 | 27 |
| Participating in prevention | 1,195 | 799 | 19 |
| Completed alcohol or other drug treatment | 51 | 50 | 1 |
| Participating support group | 132 | 117 | 3 |
| **Health (*n* = 1,352 families)** | | | |
| Obtained medical coverage | 784 | 349 | 8 |
| Obtained check-up | 740 | 486 | 12 |
| Obtained hearing/vision care | 304 | 232 | 6 |
| Obtained dental care | 470 | 252 | 6 |
| Obtained immunizations | 249 | 158 | 4 |
| Obtained other medical care | 669 | 449 | 11 |
| Improved nutrition | 644 | 254 | 6 |
| Increased awareness of needs | 1,202 | 591 | 14 |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit 19 *(continued)*

| Service | Number of Individuals Who Achieved Outcome | Number of Families That Achieved Outcome | Percent of Total Families Served (n = 4,223) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Adult Education/Employment** (*n* = 547 families) | | | |
| Working toward GED | 45 | 43 | 1 |
| Obtained GED | 36 | 36 | 1 |
| Enrolled in English-as-a-second language | 57 | 47 | 1 |
| Improved literacy skills | 63 | 56 | 1 |
| Attending college | 49 | 48 | 1 |
| Enrolled in job training | 117 | 108 | 3 |
| Completed job training | 36 | 34 | 1 |
| Obtained employment | 247 | 225 | 5 |
| Gained work experience | 142 | 138 | 3 |
| Improved employment skills | 172 | 164 | 4 |
| Looking for employment | 158 | 142 | 3 |

## Outcomes for Students

The Readiness to Learn program intends to help students arrive at school ready to learn. The basic premise of the program is that students will achieve school success once their physical and emotional health needs and other basic needs have been met with assistance provided by the program. Readiness to Learn coordinators assessed student outcomes in three areas: academic performance, attendance, and school behavior.

### *Measures of School Success*

The evaluation team selected teacher ratings as the primary measure of school success in the elementary school grades (and for alternative schools that do not issue grades). At the elementary school level, other indicators such as grades and attendance data are either unavailable or impractical to collect. One advantage of using teacher ratings is that classroom teachers see the students every day and have numerous opportunities to observe classroom performance and behavior in school. Teachers complete one rating at the time of the initial referral to Readiness to Learn and a second at the end of the school year. These ratings are compared to determine whether change has occurred. Teacher ratings are considered to be particularly sensitive to changes that occur during the school year. Data collection is directly linked to the initiation and conclusion of service delivery. Because the two ratings are usually separated by several months, it seems likely that teachers would make assessments at the end of the school year independent of intake ratings.

At the middle school and high school levels, the evaluation team selected grades, attendance, and disciplinary actions as school success indicators. Such data are generally available from school records and are widely used for this purpose. However, record keeping methods are not standardized across (or even within) school districts in the state. Furthermore, school records are kept by grading period—usually quarters or semesters—which does not correspond well to the start and completion of program services by participating families.

Program staff collected the appropriate outcome indicators at intake and again at the end of the school year for all students with whom they had had three or more contacts. The evaluation team developed a database to manage these data and conducted a series of quality control checks and statistical analyses to determine the impact of Readiness to Learn during the school year.

### *Academic Performance*

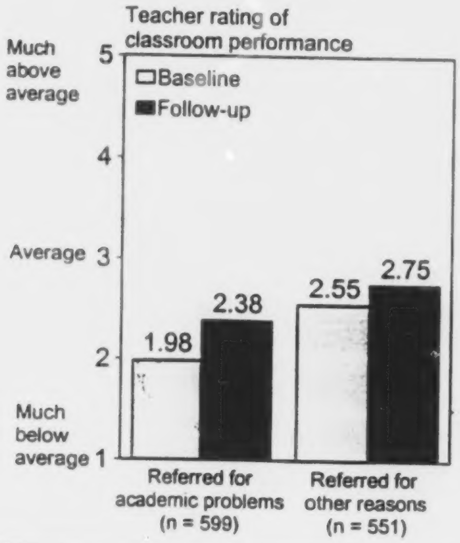
Improved academic performance is one of the primary long-term goals of the Readiness to Learn program. As the conceptual model suggests, academic performance is expected to improve once basic needs are met. The two measures of academic performance used included teacher ratings of classroom performance and grade point average (GPA).

**Finding:** ***Elementary school teachers reported improvement in the classroom performance of two-thirds of the elementary school students referred for academic problems.***

**Teacher ratings.** At the elementary school level and in situations in which grades were not available, classroom teachers rated the classroom performance observed for each child involved with Readiness to Learn using a 5-point scale ranging from *much above average* to *much below average*.

Over half (57 percent) of the students who had been referred to the program for academic problems had higher ratings at the end of the year. Exhibit 20 depicts the average baseline ratings made when the students were referred to the program and the follow-up ratings made at the end of the school year. The gain for these students is both statistically significant and quite large, suggesting that teachers felt students had made dramatic improvements in their classroom performance. In fact, the teacher ratings indicate that by the end of the school year these students were doing nearly average work. Students referred to the program for other reasons showed less improvement, partly because they were doing nearly average work before referral and there was less room for improvement.

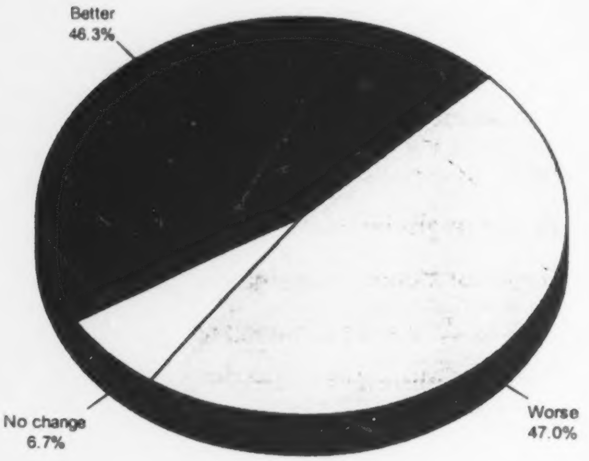
**Exhibit 20**
**Change in Teacher Ratings of Classroom Performance**



**Finding:** ***Although nearly half (46 percent) of the students with academic referrals showed improvement in GPA during the school year, no significant change in average GPA was observed during the 1998–99 school year or in a one-year follow-up for students served in 1997–98.***

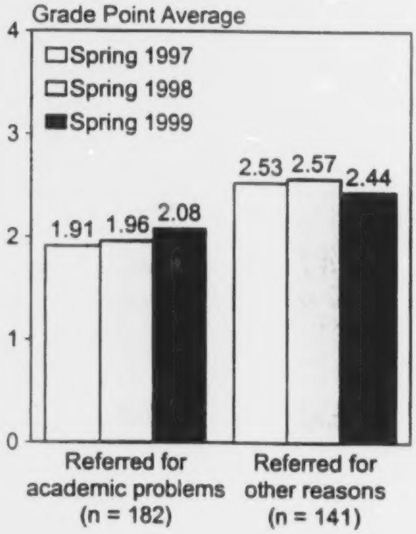
**Grade point average.** Whenever possible, program staff at the middle school and high school levels obtained GPAs for spring term 1998 and spring term 1999. In cases where the baseline spring 1998 GPA was unavailable, the fall 1998 GPA was substituted. Nearly one half (46 percent) of the students referred for academic problems made some improvement by the end of the school year, and another 7 percent had no change in GPA, as shown in Exhibit 21. However, no significant change in average GPA was observed for students regardless of the reason for referral to Readiness to Learn. Exhibit 22 shows that the higher grades observed for many students were offset by lower grades for others.

**Exhibit 21**
**Change in GPA Among Students Referred for Academic Problems**



The evaluation team felt that expecting short-term gains in GPA might be unreasonable. One explanation may be that many students received most of their services during the spring grading period, necessitating that the program impact be immediate to be reflected in spring grades. A more gradual improvement over a longer period of time seems more likely. One could also argue that maintaining a steady GPA is actually a positive outcome. Without additional assistance, at-risk students may lose ground academically each year relative to their classmates. For example, in an evaluation of the Washington State Prevention and Intervention Services Program, Deck (1999) reported that although the average GPA declined for students with limited participation in recommended services, no change in average GPA was observed for students who fully engaged in program services.

**Exhibit 22**
**Change in Average GPA**



To determine whether changes might be expected over a longer period of time, a follow-up was conducted in spring 1999 for students who had participated in the program during the 1997–98 school year. Matching data were obtained for only 323 students (32 percent of the 1997–98 participants with baseline data). A modest but significant improvement in average GPA was evident among students referred in 1997–98 for academic reasons, but no change was evident among students referred for other reasons.

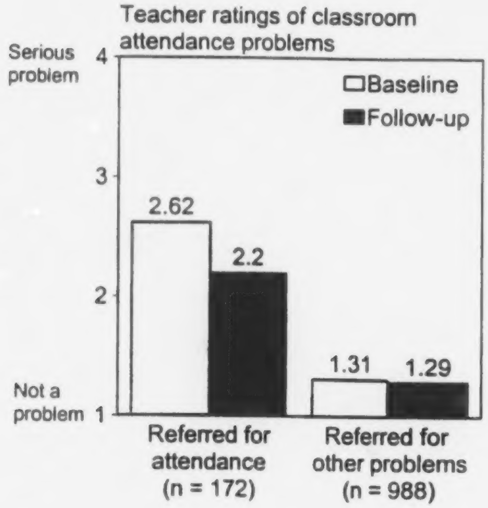
## Attendance

**Finding:** ***Elementary school teachers observed fewer attendance problems by the end of the school year.***

Attendance is widely considered an important measure of engagement in school. Low attendance is a symptom of a wide range of problems, including high mobility, poor health, substance abuse, delinquent behavior, and a poor attitude toward school. Attendance problems are closely related to other school success measures and poor attendance is a predictor of dropping out, poor grades, and delinquent behavior. The two measures of attendance that were collected were teacher ratings of classroom attendance and the number of days absent.

**Teacher ratings.** If records of days absent were not available, especially at the elementary school level, classroom teachers rated classroom attendance and tardiness at intake and again at the end of the school year to determine whether any changes had occurred while students participated in Readiness to Learn services. Teachers rated attendance on a 4-point scale ranging from *not a problem* to *a serious problem*. Thus a lower rating at follow-up indicates improvement. As expected, teachers reported that attendance was less of a problem by the end of the school year for students who had been referred for attendance problems. Exhibit 23 shows that the average rating was significantly lower at follow-up for these students. Teachers reported little improvement in attendance for students referred to Readiness to Learn for other problems, largely because attendance had not been a problem for those students.

## Exhibit 23
## Change in Teacher Ratings of Attendance

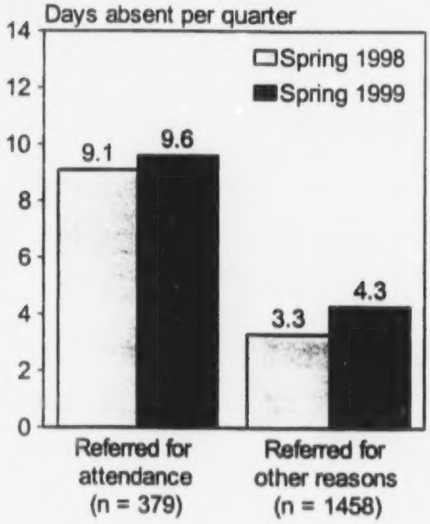


> **Finding:** ***School records showed no significant change in the average number of days absent for students referred for attendance reasons. However, a significant increase was observed among students referred for other reasons.***

**Days absent.** If attendance data were available, program staff recorded the number of days absent in spring term 1998 as baseline (or fall term 1998 if spring records were unavailable) and the number of days absent in spring term 1999 as follow-up. Because the lengths of grading periods varied across schools, the data were converted to a common scale to represent the days absent per quarter.

A small but nonsignificant increase in the average number of days absent was evident among students referred for attendance problems, as shown in Exhibit 24.

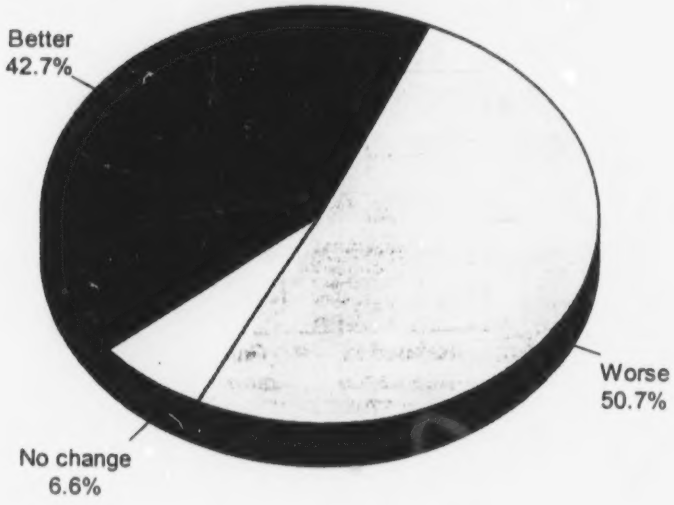
## Exhibit 24
## Change in Days Absent per Quarter



However, a small but significant increase in the average number of days absent was evident among students referred for other reasons. These averages obscure the fact that nearly 43 percent of the students referred for attendance problems showed some improvement or no change (nearly 7 percent), as seen in Exhibit 25. This apparent discrepancy was caused by a few students with large increases in the number of days absent, which offset the more modest gains made by the majority of students.

**Exhibit 25**

**Changes in Days Absent Among Students Referred for Attendance Problems**



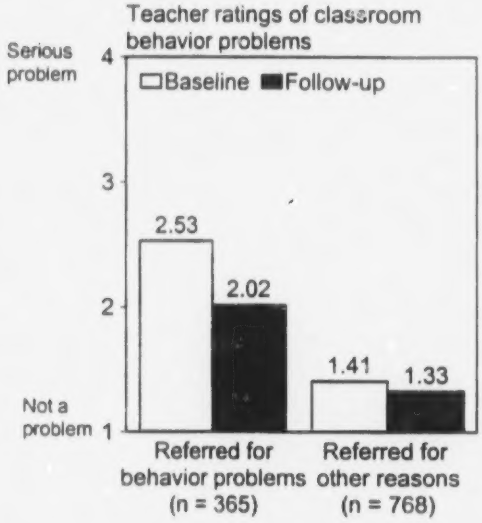
## Student Behavior

Inappropriate behavior in school disrupts the learning process for both the perpetrators and their classmates. Behavior problems, such as acting out or being withdrawn, are often symptomatic of personal or family problems. Readiness to Learn programs collected data on three indicators of student behavior in school: teacher ratings of school behavior, the number of office referrals or detentions, and the number of days students were suspended.

> **Finding:** ***Teachers observed fewer behavior problems after participation in the Readiness to Learn program among students referred for inappropriate behavior in school.***

**Teacher ratings.** Teachers rated the behavior of Readiness to Learn participants in the school setting on a 4-point scale ranging from *not a problem* to a *serious problem*. Thus a lower rating at follow-up indicates improvement. As expected, teachers observed a significant improvement among students who had been referred for inappropriate behavior, as shown in Exhibit 26. Teachers noted little improvement among students referred for other problems, primarily because behavior had not been a problem for those students.

**Exhibit 26**
**Change in Teacher Ratings of Behavior Problems**

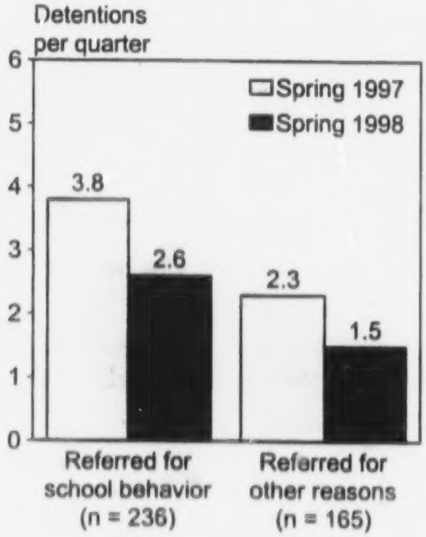


> **Finding:** ***Fewer office detentions were recorded during the spring grading period compared to the prior year for students referred for inappropriate behavior in school who had at least one office referral or detention at baseline. Students referred for other reasons also showed a significant improvement.***

**Office referrals or detentions.** Program staff obtained the number of office referrals or detentions from each student's school records. Staff reported spring term 1998 data as baseline (or fall 1998 if spring data were unavailable) and spring term 1999 data as follow-up. Because the length of the spring term typically ranged among schools from 45 to 90 days, the evaluation team converted the number of referrals or detentions to a common scale to represent the number of disciplinary actions per quarter. Furthermore, because many students had received no disciplinary actions, only students with at least one office referral or detention at baseline were included in the analysis.

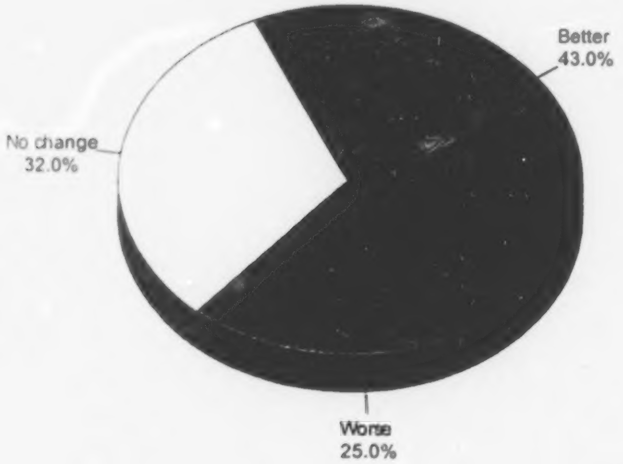
Exhibit 27 shows that students referred to the Readiness to Learn program for behavioral problems received significantly fewer office referrals or detentions on average at follow-up. Students referred to the program for other reasons were less likely to have incurred office referrals or detentions and experienced a small decrease in office referrals or detentions. A closer inspection of the data was revealing. Exhibit 28 shows that nearly half (43 percent) of the students with behavioral referrals showed some improvement, whereas one-fourth (26 percent) experienced an increase in the number of office referrals or detentions.

**Exhibit 27**
**Change in Office Detentions or Referrals per Quarter**



To determine the program's effects over a longer period, a second follow-up was conducted one year later for students who participated in Readiness to Learn during the 1997–98 school year. Matched office referral or detention data for spring 1997, spring 1998, and spring 1999 were obtained for 142 students who had at least one detention at baseline (21 percent of the 1997–98 participants with baseline data). The results indicated a significant reduction in the average number of office referrals or detentions over the two-year period.

**Exhibit 28**
**Change in Office Detentions Among Students With Behavior Referrals**

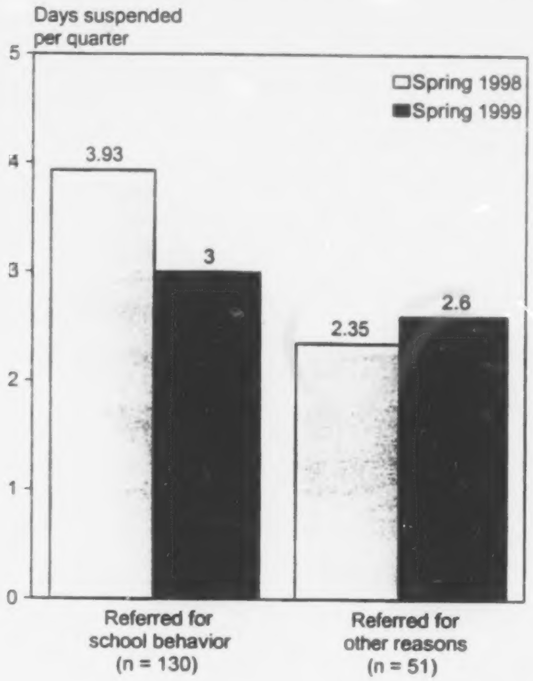


> **Finding*****: Over three-fourths of the students with a referral for inappropriate behavior in school and at least one suspension the prior year showed some improvement in the number of days suspended. The average number of days suspended declined significantly for this group.***

**Suspensions.** For baseline and follow-up, program staff obtained from school records the number of days students were suspended during spring term. Because the length of the spring term varied across schools, the evaluation team converted the number of suspensions to a common scale to indicate the number of days suspended per quarter. Many students had received no disciplinary actions, and only students with at least one suspension at baseline were included in the analysis. No significant decline in the average number of days suspended was observed among students who had been suspended at least one day at baseline and who had been referred to the program for behavior problems, nor was a significant decline evident among students referred for other reasons, as Exhibit 29 shows.

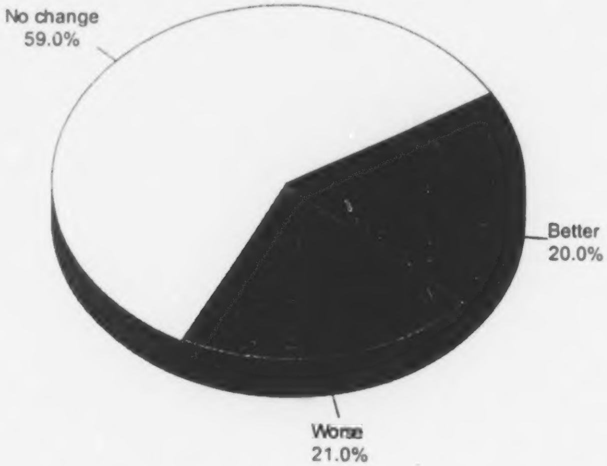
**Exhibit 29**

**Change in the Number of Days Suspended per Quarter**



Again, closer examination of the data revealed that a few individuals showed a large increase in the number of days suspended, whereas most students showed a modest decrease in the number of days suspended. Exhibit 30 indicates that one-fifth (nearly 20 percent) of the behavior referral students who had at least one suspension day on record at baseline showed a reduction in the number of suspension days at follow-up. Another one-fifth (21 percent) showed more days suspended. Again, these findings suggest that some students benefited from the program, whereas others exhibited increasingly less desirable behavior.

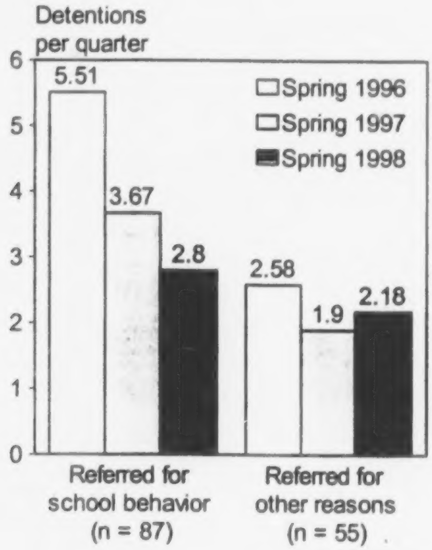
## Exhibit 30
## Change in Days Suspended Among Students Referred for Behavior Problems



The evidence from the three indicators of student behavior suggests that for many students participation in the Readiness to Learn program resulted in improved behavior in school—particularly those students referred explicitly for inappropriate behavior in school. The indicators derived from teacher ratings and school records show consistent results.

Longitudinal data were collected for students who participated in Readiness to Learn during1997–98. Exhibit 31 shows an improvement in behavior for participants who were referred for behavior problems and who had at least one detention or office referral prior to participation in RTL. These students exhibited a significant reduction in detentions and office referrals over a two-year period (complete data were available on 21 percent of the 1997–98 participants who had baseline data).

## Exhibit 31
## Longitudinal Behavior Outcomes for 1997–98 Participants

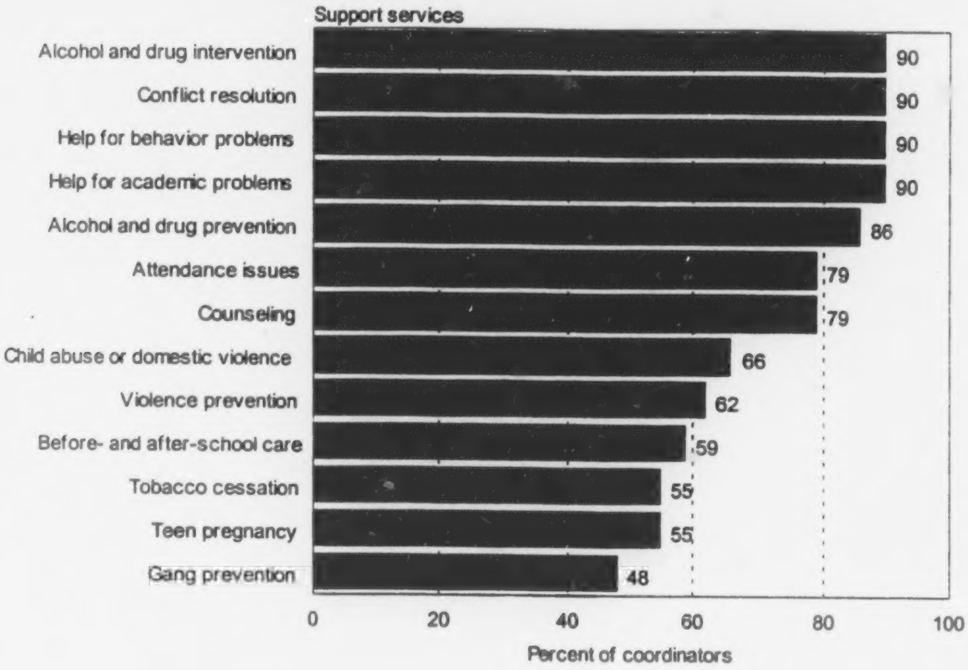


# How Has Readiness to Learn Contributed to Community Safety?

Previous evaluations of Readiness to Learn did not focus on Readiness to Learn's role in ensuring that children are safe in their communities. To more fully address this issue, questions about Readiness to Learn's contribution to community safety were included in the survey completed by program coordinators in spring 1999. This chapter discusses the results of those questions. Only two Readiness to Learn coordinators were able to provide safety statistics, and not enough information was available to interpret these data in the context of Readiness to Learn services.

Twenty-four Readiness to Learn program coordinators provided information about support services available in Readiness to Learn schools and their surrounding neighborhoods. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) suggested that such services provide assets and resources that promote safety and healthy development and remove barriers to learning in schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Most Readiness to Learn programs provide services through their consortia and involvement with other community coalitions. Over 90 percent of the 29 coordinators who responded to the survey reported that their schools provide services related to conflict resolution, behavior problems, and academic problems. Eighty-six of the respondents reported that their schools offer services related to alcohol and other drug prevention, and 79 percent reported that their schools address attendance issues and the counseling needs of students. Schools were less likely to address family issues. For example, only 66 percent of the coordinators reported services related to child abuse or domestic violence and 55 percent reported programs to assist pregnant teens. Exhibit 32 shows the percentage of Readiness to Learn coordinators who reported that their schools provide various services that contribute to a safe environment conducive to learning.

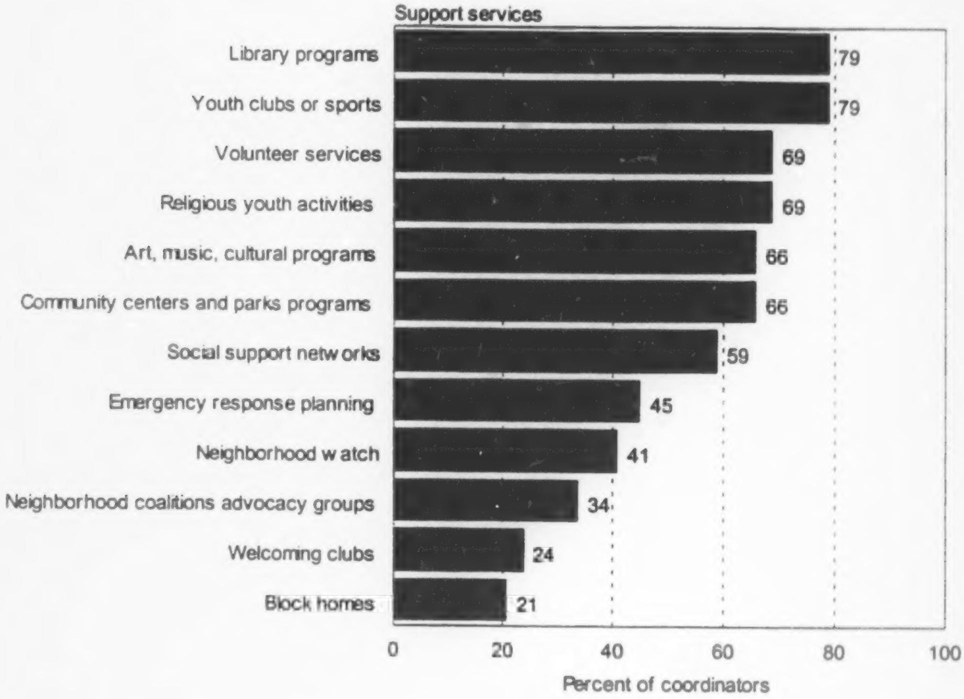
## Exhibit 32
## Percent of Coordinators Who Reported That Their Schools Offer Services Affecting Safety



Program coordinators reported that their neighborhoods also offer services that support safety, healthy activities, and an environment of healthy youth development (see Exhibit 33). The need for and availability of these supports varied between urban and rural sites. The most common neighborhood services were library programs and youth clubs or sports activities. The next most common services were volunteer services, community centers or parks programs, and religious youth activities. Only one-third of the coordinators reported the presence of neighborhood coalitions and advocacy groups, highlighting the importance Readiness to Learn efforts to promote collaboration.

## Exhibit 33

## Percentage of Coordinators Who Reported That Their School Neighborhoods Provide Support Services Affecting Safety



All program coordinators indicated believed that Readiness to Learn positively impacts school and neighborhood safety either directly through Readiness to Learn programs or indirectly by increasing awareness of and involvement in positive activities and support networks. As one program coordinator stated:

> Because the Readiness to Learn program addresses the needs of at-risk youth specifically, these areas are targeted in the family service plans. The communities served by [our program] have seen a reduction in teen pregnancy, youth violence, and the school dropout rate since the Readiness to Learn program began.

Another coordinator commented:

> We know that as a result of our work, more students have stayed in school and completed credits, and more students have overall decreased their absences and poor behaviors. We suspect that the more students are successful in school the less likely they are to engage in violent or unlawful activities.

# How Has Readiness to Learn Contributed to Systemic Change?

OSPI has described Readiness to Learn as focusing on bringing "disconnected" programs together to provide collaborative responses for children and families that improve student achievement in school. Readiness to Learn programs are to bring schools and communities together to create systems change in programs for families and children. Systems change is to be manifested through structural service integration, operational service delivery, and culturally responsive approaches. A survey of Readiness to Learn coordinators revealed examples how their programs worked toward systemic change. These examples are summarized in this chapter in terms of service integration, service delivery, and cultural and community attitudes.

## Service Integration

Readiness to Learn program coordinators cited a variety of ways in which service integration had been improved. Coordinators commonly mentioned increased networking with exiting community services, which helped various agencies become aware of one another and therefore better able to make referrals and increase the availability of services in schools. Coordinators also mentioned the role of Readiness to Learn program staff in providing creative, barrier-free services that have increased the interconnection of schools and service providers. Programs that are supported by blended funding offer staff with a variety of skills at a single site. In at least one site, over time Readiness to Learn service providers have become increasingly considered key school staff rather than part of a separate program. Readiness to Learn programs have also successfully collaborated with schools and community agencies in applications for grant funding (e.g., a federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant). One program coordinator observed, "A multiplying effect has become evident as non-Readiness to Learn-funded services have moved to our site and made use of our facilities. This would not be possible without the Readiness to Learn project." Another coordinator commented, "We have increased options for family members to self-refer to the family resource advocates who have become very familiar with local resources and can help assist families access them in a minimum amount of time." Program coordinators reported that improved service integration has lead to increased access to resources for families and children in need.

## Service Delivery

Readiness to Learn program coordinators generally mentioned changes in service delivery in terms of the kinds of services they provide, involving families in service planning, conducting home visits, and providing services in accessible locations. Program coordinators frequently mentioned that these changes resulted in a decrease in the time families must spend waiting to access services and an increase in the number of families served. Program coordinators reported that the provision of Readiness to Learn services at school has allowed families to access early intervention services that were previously unavailable to them. Program coordinators also described efforts to enhance services—for example, working with a dental coalition to provide services by dentists who accept low-income patients.

## Cultural and Community Attitudes

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, institutions, and behavior patterns of a group of people. Thus Readiness to Learn programs may have a cultural impact on particular community demographic groups, school systems, community agencies, or on whole communities. Program coordinators described cultural and community changes brought about by the Readiness to Learn program, including an increase in the number of bilingual and bicultural staff working with Hispanic populations, increased cooperation by tribal agencies, increased community awareness of the needs of immigrant populations and how to respond to them, and increased community support for the program. Program coordinators also noted increased communication among consortium members and school districts. One coordinator remarked, "Readiness to Learn has stimulated increased communication and planning among schools and agencies since its implementation."

These culturally responsive approaches, regardless of the nature of the culture being addressed, have helped improve access to services.

### Strategies Used to Bring About Changes

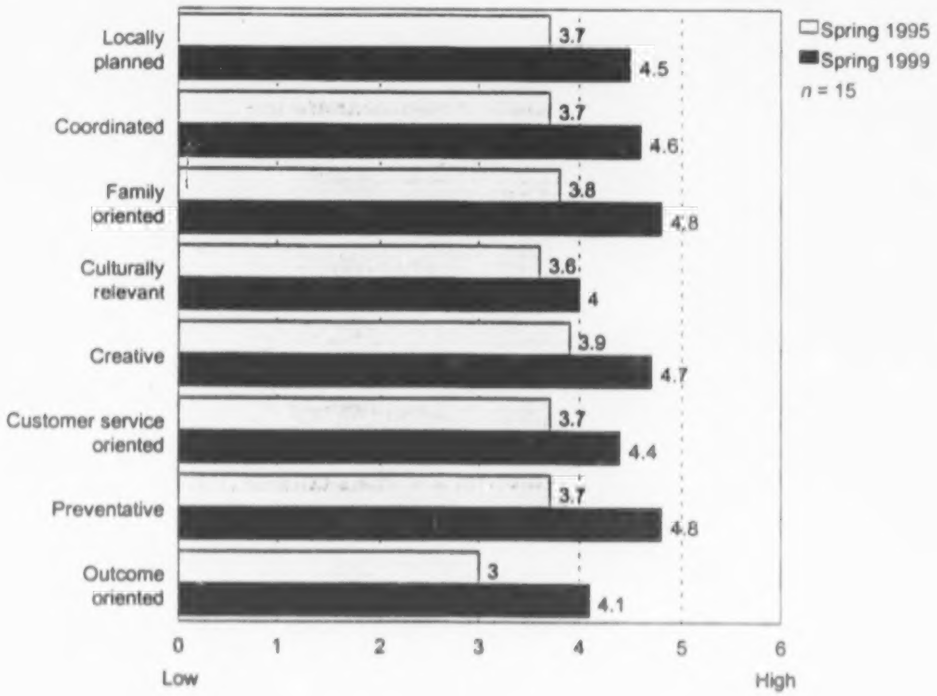
Two key strategies emerged from program coordinators' comments about how they had brought about these systemic changes. First, program coordinators mentioned frequent, open, and honest communication through a variety of media. Second, coordinators cited regular meetings of consortium members with each other or with other local coalitions and planning councils. Others reported strategies for bringing about systemic change, such as a willingness to work with others, hiring respectful staff who are linguistically matched to clients, and utilizing evaluation results for program planning. One program coordinator commented that systemic change is achieved by "just working hard at responding to needs."

### Ratings of Progress in Achieving Systemic Change

The evaluation team sought to learn Readiness to Learn programs' perceptions about their own progress achieving systemic change. During site visits conducted in the spring of 1995, the spring of 1998, and through a survey mailed to programs in the spring of 1999, the evaluation team asked local program staff or consortia to assess the progress they had achieved in implementing each of the eight principles of service integration. Specific benchmarks were provided for each of the Family Policy Initiative principles, and programs were asked to rate themselves on a scale from 1 (*low*) to 5 (*high*). As Exhibits 34 and 35 show, grantees originally funded in 1993 and grantees originally funded in 1995 showed growth in implementing the principles of service integration.

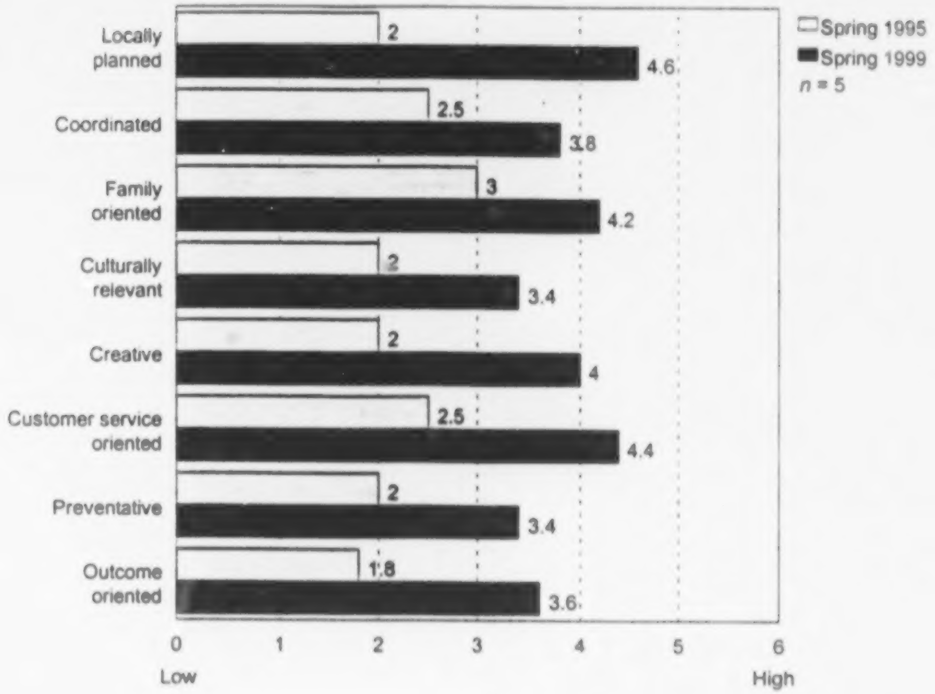
In 1995, the 1993 grantees rated themselves as quite satisfied with their service integration across all indicators. The one exception to this finding was in the area of outcome orientation. The 1993 grantees' ratings indicated growth in all areas between 1995 and 1999, and their progress in addressing issues related to providing services that are creative, preventive, and outcome-oriented showed the greatest growth.

**Exhibit 34**
**1993 Grantees' Progress Toward Service Integration**



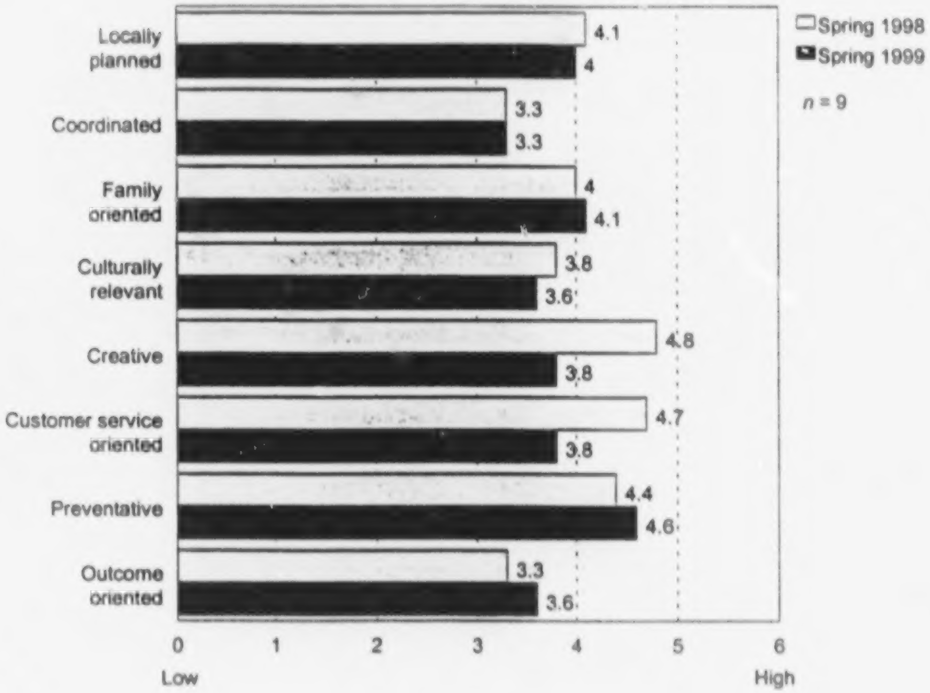
The number of 1995 grantees was smaller. The 1995 grantees' initial assessment of their level of service integration was very conservative on most indicators. The 1995 grantees' greatest area of growth was also in the area providing outcome-oriented services. The 1995 grantees also showed considerable growth in providing locally planned, creative, and customer service-oriented services.

**Exhibit 35**
**1995 Grantees' Progress Toward Service Integration**



Although the 1997 grantees were generally not as far along in service integration as the 1993 and 1995 grantees, Exhibit 36 reveals rapid growth during the first year of their grants in most areas, especially preventive, locally planned, and family-oriented services. New programs no doubt benefited from the experiences of the more mature programs and adopted practices that seemed most productive for their local needs and strategies. As might be expected, grantees rated themselves lowest in the area of coordinated services, an area that takes time to develop. Coordinating services requires building working relationships and collaboration with other agencies and programs. As programs funded in 1997 became established and consolidated their services during the second year (1998–99), they considered their creativity and customer service orientation to have decreased and their focus on prevention and program outcomes to have improved slightly. Little change was reported from the first to the second year in most areas of services integration for the Readiness to Learn programs funded in 1997.

## Exhibit 36
## 1997 Grantees' Progress Toward Service Integration



# What Readiness to Learn Practices Are Most Promising and What Challenges Do Programs Face?

Since the inception of Readiness to Learn in 1993, programs throughout Washington have implemented a wide variety of strategies to promote success in school. Although many of these strategies have proved successful, programs have also encountered significant challenges to offering integrated, school-linked services for children and their families. This chapter describes the practices that the 31 Readiness to Learn programs have found successful and the challenges they continue to face as they strive to observe the eight principles of services integration outlined in the Family Policy Initiative. These eight principles define services and supports as (1) locally planned, (2) coordinated, (3) family-oriented, (4) culturally relevant, (5) creative, (6) customer service-oriented, (7) preventive, and (8) outcome-oriented.

## Locally Planned Services

One of the eight principles developed by the Family Policy Council to help communities plan and implement family programs states that locally planned services and supports should:

- Operate on the belief that each community has special characteristics, needs, and strengths.
- Include a cross-section of local community partners—from the public and private sectors—in planning and delivering services and supports.
- Support these partners in addressing the needs of their communities through both short-range and long-range planning and in establishing priorities within state and federal standards.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Locally Planned Services*

For locally planned services to be effective and efficient, they must fit the community. Readiness to Learn programs reported employing three broad strategies to attain this fit: convening or participating in regular meetings of relevant county or community service providers, seeking input from important stakeholders in the community, and tailoring services to local school sites.

**Convening or participating in regular meetings of relevant community service providers.** All Readiness to Learn programs convene or participate in needs assessment and planning meetings with local service providers. Readiness to Learn programs have a variety of names for these groups, such as consortia, planning teams, partnerships, advisory or interagency councils, and steering committees. The purpose of these groups is, for the most part, to identify the special characteristics, needs, and strengths in the local community; to set goals; and to develop strategies for effective and efficient service delivery. A wide variety of service providers participate in these meetings. In general, they represent child, family, and housing service agencies; health and mental health departments; hospitals; school districts; community colleges; universities; job training programs; employment services; substance abuse prevention programs; law enforcement and justice; tribal programs; and the business and religious communities. Typically, these groups meet either monthly or quarterly and involve about 12 to 15 member agencies. Subgroups of consortium members may meet more frequently to address specific community or family needs.

In many cases Readiness to Learn program staff have been responsible for establishing and maintaining these collaborative groups. Prior to Readiness to Learn's involvement, many of these groups either did not exist or did not deliver services according to a locally organized plan. Readiness to Learn program coordinators have reported varying degrees of implementation of their consortia—some are quite dependent on Readiness to Learn to convene and plan meetings, whereas a few are so committed to the value of the work that they would continue to meet even without Readiness to Learn involvement.

**Seeking input from important stakeholders in the community.** Family members, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the Readiness to Learn program are regularly consulted regarding the planning and delivery of local services. Readiness to Learn programs gather this input in a variety of ways, including convening regular meetings of important stakeholders, inviting stakeholders to attend or address planning meetings, conducting regular home visits of Readiness to Learn families, and completing formal and informal needs assessments.

**Tailoring services to each site.** Most Readiness to Learn programs offer services at more than one school or site, and some cover large geographic areas. Staff from these programs feel that to be successful, planning at the school level and including families and community representatives are important. Several Readiness to Learn programs formed local site councils to make decisions about the use of service purchase funds. Many schools have implemented schoolwide planning processes to identify global school needs and to develop services to address those needs. Local planning and control has enabled Readiness to Learn programs to be more responsive to community needs.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Locally Planned Services*

Readiness to Learn program staff indicated two dominant challenges or barriers their programs face in their attempts to plan local services and supports: problems with consortium or partnership members and insufficient resources and services.

**Problems with consortium or partnership members.** Generally speaking, turf issues appeared to be the biggest challenge or barrier that Readiness to Learn programs face in coordinating locally planned services and supports. According to Readiness to Learn staff, local agencies compete for limited community resources, may be reluctant to consolidate services, and may resist changing old ways of doing things. In addition, sometimes maintaining the participation of top-level agency staff is a challenge, often because they lack the time to participate or because they must travel long distances to meetings. Other challenges include fully engaging school districts and staff turnover in agencies, which disrupts program momentum. Philosophical differences between agencies and a lack of vision about potential impact of greater interagency collaboration are also challenging.

**Insufficient resources and services.** A common complaint from Readiness to Learn program staff is that the resources necessary to provide needed services are limited and insufficient to meet needs. Among the issues concerning resources are:

- The limited availability of needed services, particularly in rural communities.
- Insufficient time to interact with local agency personnel, to plan, and to travel to distant meetings.
- Differing eligibility requirements of agencies that make service collaboration and resources pooling difficult.
- Difficulty keeping abreast of new agencies and program and personnel changes in existing agencies.
- Difficulty involving the larger state agencies in the consortia.
- Difficulty obtaining data on the incidence of issues of concern, such as youth violence and delinquent behavior.

## Coordinated Services

The Family Policy Council principles state that human service programs should incorporate coordinated and collaborative strategies into their planning, development, and delivery of services to children and families. Readiness to Learn programs:

- Develop strategies and skills for collaborative planning, problem solving, and service delivery.
- Encourage coordination and innovation by providing both formal and informal ways for people to communicate and collaborate on program planning.
- Allow clients, vendors, community members, and other agencies to creatively provide the most effective, responsive, and flexible services.

- Commit to an open exchange of skills and information and expect individuals throughout the system to treat each other with respect, dignity, and understanding.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Coordinated Services*

According to program staff, coordination is the foundation for effective and efficient service delivery and is a key element of the Readiness to Learn philosophy. Coordinator survey results indicate that Readiness to Learn programs achieve service coordination through several means: regular consortium meetings and effective communication, formal or informal interagency agreements and procedures, and shared access to data.

**Consortium meetings and communication.** Readiness to Learn programs convene or participate in a variety of consortium meetings to plan and implement services. Well-planned, efficient meetings addressing topics of interest and value to participants are significant to continuing the involvement of key members. In addition to regularly scheduled meetings, Readiness to Learn staff utilize other strategies to promote service integration. For example, staff reportedly attend other agencies' board meetings, develop collaborative grant applications with agencies, and ensure that Readiness to Learn consortia meeting minutes are widely distributed. In some cases, coordination has improved by folding several boards or task forces into one interagency board. Many projects make extensive use of e-mail and telephone contacts to maintain frequent communication among service providers.

**Interagency agreements or procedures.** Some Readiness to Learn programs establish informal agreements with local partners to share information. Other programs use *consent for the release of information* forms or engage in contractual relationships with partners. In addition, agency staff provide training to aid collaboration by helping one another understand each agency's forms and procedures. In some cases, formal agreements have been beneficial in overcoming bureaucratic barriers to collaboration or to providing an underpinning for the development of trust. The extent to which communities have a history of cooperative projects or other types of collaboration and the extent to which the participating agency staff are committed to identifying and addressing services gaps collaboratively also seem to be important to success. The coordinator of one Readiness to Learn program observed:

> After two years the consortium has interacted and worked closely enough with each other while serving families to begin to ask the bigger questions and begin the self-evaluation process. How well does our school invite and include families? How effective are the programs in drawing in "hard to reach" families? In what way can we streamline our services to pool our resources to most effectively serve families? What formal interagency agreements can we make to support lasting change? The Readiness to Learn focus of collaboration and systems change encourages the Readiness to Learn consortium to do this difficult work.

**Shared access to data.** Readiness to Learn programs utilize available information and often share the information they collect with other programs. For example, programs may coordinate regionwide needs assessments that are shared with all service providers. In addition, many Readiness to Learn programs convene meetings to coordinate client services. These meetings, which consist of the Readiness to Learn staff and other professionals, such as nurses and counselors, to coordinate services and diminish service duplication. Formal family plans and minutes from family team meetings also serve as vehicles for communication. Several programs have developed resource handbooks to ensure that consortium members are aware of services available from each community agency. Readiness to Learn staff who were interviewed also reported using a multiagency or community team approach, focusing on family needs, and providing follow-up contact with referring persons or agencies.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Coordinated Services*

Readiness to Learn staff cited several difficulties in achieving coordinated service delivery. One of the main issues is the amount of time needed to attend numerous meetings and the resulting inconsistent attendance by some agency representatives. In addition, several programs cited a lack of communication between the administrators that attend meetings

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and the staff who provide the services as a barrier to service coordination. Some challenges to coordination are geographic, such as large distances between agencies in some counties, and funding that is allocated by county, thereby discouraging cross-county collaborations. In Readiness to Learn programs that serve multiple districts, understanding the different cultures and priorities of each school district can be a challenge to coordination. For example, gaining and keeping the commitment to Readiness to Learn by school administrators who are focused on test results is achieved by helping them realize the importance of support and services to children's ability to meet educational standards. Other barriers to coordination included confidentiality constraints, territoriality by some agencies, the strict service eligibility guidelines of some agencies, trust issues, staff turnover, and the lack of technology to facilitate communications.

## Family-Oriented Services

The Family Policy Council also suggests that services and supports be family-oriented. More specifically, Readiness to Learn programs should provide services that:

- Respond to the changing needs of families.
- Meet needs identified by families.
- Meet family needs in dignified and respectful ways.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Family-Oriented Services*

Virtually all of the Readiness to Learn programs gave themselves high marks on their commitment to family-oriented services. Program staff provided numerous examples of the strategies they use to address service needs in respectful ways. These strategies can be classified into several broad categories: accessible service locations; convenient timing of services; relevant service models; serving parents and children together; and the provision of necessary support, follow-up, and staff training.

**Accessible service locations.** Many Readiness to Learn programs locate services where they are most accessible to families. Some programs have designated school offices or classrooms as family resource centers. Parents are encouraged to drop in to visit with staff, check out resource materials, and attend activities and classes. Others, such as the Orcas Island Readiness to Learn program, have established family resources centers in separate facilities. Project LOOK is located in the apartment complexes where the families and children needing their services live. The social services building on the Swinomish reservation houses a Readiness to Learn program, making the Readiness to Learn staff more accessible to students and families. Other programs provide home visits as an important approach to making services convenient for families. Many programs feature flexibility in service locations, offering services in schools, churches, and homes in addition to the Readiness to Learn offices. In all cases, programs strive to locate services where they are as convenient and nonthreatening to families as possible.

**Flexible timing of services.** Many programs have made special efforts to offer their services at times that are convenient for families. In some cases, staff work in the evenings to accommodate working parents. They also offer parenting education classes and family support groups in the evenings to ensure greater participation.

**Relevant service models.** A key feature of many Readiness to Learn service models is a comprehensive family needs assessment. In some programs this is a formal process; in other programs the process is more informal. For example, the Whidbey Island Readiness to Learn program uses the individualized tailored care (ITC) model, which involves families in assembling a team that helps them identify strengths and needs, set goals, solve problems, implement strategies, and access resources. Most programs use a model that emphasizes family skills and strengths rather than needs or deficits. Some programs have developed formal strategies to ensure that families are involved in all steps of the service process. An active role by a school social worker or family advocate is also a key feature of many service models because these individuals can act as a primary link between the families and schools.

**Serving parents and children together.** Readiness to Learn programs place an emphasis on serving the entire family, rather than addressing children's needs in isolation. Some programs try to meet with the entire family after a child is referred to Readiness to Learn to engage everyone involved or to provide family counseling rather than individual counseling. Readiness to Learn programs stress ongoing communication with families via telephone, e-mail, letters, and personal visits. Many programs, such as the Washington Alliance, offer universal access activities designed to appeal to all family members and to support and strengthen the family unit. The Family Night Out programs held in rural communities in Stevens County and Spokane's West Valley have successfully engaged nearly all the families in the communities in social, recreational, and educational evenings that foster relationships and help address issues of family isolation.

**Providing necessary support.** To ensure that families can participate in Readiness to Learn services, many programs provide child care for group events such as parenting workshops and support groups. In addition, some programs assist with finding respite child care for families in crisis or child care for parents attending social service appointments. Other support may include making an initial appointment with a service provider, advocating for the family with school or agency staff, providing transportation to and from appointments, accompanying parents to appointments to help them take that first step, or providing translation services.

**Follow-up.** Successful Readiness to Learn programs also make a point of following up with children and families to maintain lines of communication and to ensure that the recommended services or activities meet the families' needs. The frequency and duration of ongoing contacts with families vary from daily or weekly to quarterly, according to families' needs. Families are encouraged to remain a part of the working team when they have developed a plan with specific goals. Many projects use release forms to assure the family that Readiness to Learn staff will be working with other agency staff and sharing information that will help them address family needs. To gain a better sense of families' perspectives, a few programs ask families to complete a questionnaire evaluating Readiness to Learn staff services.

**Staff training.** A key component of family-oriented services is the provision of staff training. Programs cited training in family-centered planning, cultural issues, and creating family-friendly schools as being helpful in meeting this service integration benchmark. Some programs have invited building principals to join program staff and other consortium members in this training.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Family-Oriented Services*

Although nearly all the Readiness to Learn programs considered themselves very successful in providing family-oriented services, most reported some challenges in meeting this goal. The primary barrier they have experienced is that some high-needs families choose not to participate, perhaps due to a lack of trust in schools or agencies. Other families have difficulty following through, perhaps because they feel embarrassed by the referral process, or because they lack the volition or energy to follow through on recommendations. Other issues that affect family involvement include transportation problems, time constraints, language barriers, cultural differences, lack of telephones, and family mobility. In addition, program staff reported occasional difficulty involving a family in a student's problem because other school staff or the parents themselves perceive the student as being the sole source of the problem. In small communities, families are sometimes concerned about confidentiality. Some programs also experienced barriers to following up with families because of difficulty scheduling meeting times, concern about the safety of case managers conducting home visits, or inadequate staff coverage to advocate for student or family needs.

## Culturally Relevant Services

In response to the diversity of cultures in the state of Washington, the Family Policy Initiative principles require that collaborative efforts be culturally relevant. Readiness to Learn programs work to ensure that:

- Family cultures and beliefs are identified and used as resources.
- Access is provided to culturally distinct communities.

- Self-sufficiency is enhanced for every culture.

***Successful Strategies for Providing Culturally Relevant Services***

Readiness to Learn programs varied widely in their ratings of their abilities to provide culturally relevant services. Program staff identified several successful strategies they use to ensure that their services meet this goal. These strategies include hiring staff from the cultures reflected in the community in which they provide services, providing training to all program staff on issues relevant to the cultures the program serves, training staff in the culture of poverty and in issues such as limited education and substance abuse. Some programs also turn to their consortium members to help them understand and communicate with families of different cultures. Programs also reported using bilingual staff or support and providing translations of important project materials.

**Hiring bilingual, bicultural staff.** The most common strategy Readiness to Learn programs reported using to enhance cultural relevance is hiring bilingual and bicultural staff. In some cases this approach has resulted in job-sharing—paying a staff member partly with migrant education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, or ESL funds and partly with Readiness to Learn funds. Several programs with larger minority populations have hired members from those communities to be family service workers or family advocates. For example, the Nooksack Valley Readiness to Learn program hired staff from both the Native American and Hispanic communities. Programs that are unable to hire culturally diverse staff select candidates who have had experience relating to cultures other than their own or who are trained in cultural sensitivity.

**Providing training to all program staff in cultural diversity and sensitivity.** Nearly all of the Readiness to Learn programs reported providing training in cross-cultural issues to all program staff and many partner agency staff members. This training has addressed understanding the needs and perspectives of different ethnic or cultural groups and low-income families.

**Forming partnerships with other agencies that provide services to specific cultural groups.** Many Readiness to Learn programs have sought to include specific cultural or minority groups in their consortia member agencies and organizations. For example, the KIDS First program involves the Refugee Health Advocacy Project; Nooksack Valley Readiness to Learn includes the Nooksack Tribe and the Whatcom Hispanic Organization. Whidbey Island Readiness to Learn has linked up with the Oak Harbor Multicultural Awareness Council. Readiness to Learn staff also seek to make connections with minority health care professionals. For example, the Connections program found a Native American psychologist to administer a test to a young Native American child.

**Using a service delivery process that is culturally sensitive to all families.** Several programs indicated addressing individual families' cultures by building trust and rapport with the families, spending enough time to obtain a quality assessment of the families' strengths and needs, and then implementing appropriate strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. Programs that use a family team model encourage families to invite friends from the family's cultural group to participate on the family support team. Members of community teams are selected to represent people of different ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds. Other strategies for ensuring cultural sensitivity include using interpreters and translated written materials as needed, offering parenting workshops in Spanish, and providing services in family homes.

**Participating in community cultural events.** Many Readiness to Learn program staff emphasize participating in the various cultural events in their communities to better understand the traditions of the populations served and to foster greater acceptance of Readiness to Learn staff by members of the cultural community. For instance, the La Conner School District Readiness to Learn program coordinator reported regularly attending the Swinomish tribal events and the training programs offered by various Native American groups to build trust and increase her knowledge of their cultures and beliefs. Participation in events such as Cinco de Mayo celebrations has also helped some programs promote their services in minority communities.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Culturally Relevant Services*

In spite of their best efforts, providing culturally relevant services has been a challenge for some Readiness to Learn programs. Some programs have reported that because so few minorities live in their service areas, they have experienced difficulty becoming familiar with the cultures of single individuals from minority groups. Recent influxes of new cultural groups have also contributed to some Readiness to Learn programs being unprepared to work with those families. Programs have reported difficulty finding translators for some language groups or trainers who can deliver parenting workshops in their languages. Even programs that can find qualified translators are not able to always make them available or acceptable to families. A few program staff expressed a need to receive more training to better understand the cultures in their areas, especially the cultures of immigrant populations, the uneducated, and the poor. Staff reported that some families' cultures make seeking and accepting help from outsiders difficult for them. Families who have had received welfare assistance for more than one generation have reportedly found making changes to become self-sufficient difficult. One program staff member indicated that because many families feel very isolated and alienated from the community, involving them in a support network is challenging.

## Creative Services

According to the Family Policy Council, human service programs should also incorporate creative strategies into their planning, development, and delivery of services to children and families. These principles suggest that Readiness to Learn programs:

- Increase the flexibility of funding and programs to promote innovation in planning, development, and the provision of quality services.
- Simplify, reduce, or eliminate rules that are barriers to the coordination and provision of quality services.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Creative Services*

Readiness to Learn programs reported using a variety of creative strategies to improve service planning and delivery. One of the most commonly used strategies involves building a consortium of concerned citizens who represent different aspects of the community. These consortia include a wide variety of social service agency staff and representatives from the business community, churches, schools, and cultural groups. This broad inclusiveness has enabled these programs to engage in collaborative grant proposal writing efforts with other agencies, to jointly fund various activities and programs, and to engage in the creative brainstorming of solutions to family and community problems. For example, the Greater Yakima Readiness to Learn Partnership developed a countywide needs assessment process that requires partner agencies to share information, contribute funds, and use information cooperatively to deliver integrated services. The Success Through School Attendance Readiness to Learn Program in Olympia formed partnerships with the Seattle Mariners, the Disney Store, and other businesses to provide services and goods to Readiness to Learn families. The Walla Walla County Readiness to Learn program combines resources with other agencies to help families (e.g., several agencies each paid for one night's lodging for a family that was homeless because of a fire until more permanent housing was found).

Programs reported a number of additional creative accomplishments. The Vashon Island program hired people with multiple community connections and concerns and utilizes this bank of highly motivated individuals to tap into the community to fund creative solutions to problems. The Greater Yakima Readiness to Learn program uses community volunteers in lieu of professionals when appropriate. Several programs house other social service agencies within school buildings to provide easier access for families. The Whidby Island Readiness to Learn program has developed community teams to provide flexible funds for families and found local businesses and professionals to provide pro bono services and resources. For example, community members have provided logs and volunteers to cut, split, and deliver cords of wood to families for heating. Many programs reported that their consortium members are excited about collaborating and being more flexible. One program coordinator commented, "Joint applications for future funding have strengthened the collaboration effort and topical discussions on barriers to student performance have given rise to new ways of collaborating on future projects."

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Creative Services*

A creative approach to service delivery is not without challenges. The most significant barrier reported was funding restraints that mitigate creative efforts. Nearly every Readiness to Learn program noted that rigid rules, regulations, and eligibility requirements interfere with creative planning. Other concerns include the amount of time needed to explore the range of options for students and families, insufficient funding, and waiting lists for some services.

## Customer Service-Oriented Services

Readiness to Learn programs provide services that:

- Create a climate that empowers staff to deliver quality programs and services.
- Are courteous, sensitive, competent, and professional.
- Uphold the dignity and respect of individuals and families by reflecting a system that provides appropriate staff recognition, information, training, and support.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Customer Service-Oriented Services*

To enhance their effectiveness in offering effective services to meet customers' needs, Readiness to Learn programs offered training for Readiness to Learn staff, school staff, and others. Training topics included developing community resources by enrolling students or families in programs that provide medical coupons, violence deescalation, family-centered case management strategies, child and adolescent mental health diagnosis and treatment, gang prevention, cultural sensitivity, truancy prevention, and alcohol and other drug issues. Most programs also reported providing regular or periodic training on community resources, intake procedures, and case management. Programs utilize the annual Readiness to Learn institute to train all program staff. Family service advocates or home visitors meet regularly to share their successes and solve problems, and many Readiness to Learn staff work flexible schedules to meet with families in the evenings. This flexibility enhances the ability to provide quality, customer-oriented community services to families.

Collaborative work with consortium members also allows Readiness to Learn programs the opportunity to orient their services to consumer needs. For example, in Stevens County the collaborative efforts of consortium partners addressed youth violence prevention by creating a joint task force and partnership agreement with county schools. The North Chelan–Douglas Readiness to Learn Consortium has recognized a need for dental care for low-income families and is addressing this need by working with local dentists to improve the access and quality of services to those families.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Customer Service-Oriented Services*

Although most Readiness to Learn programs have expressed satisfaction with their customer service orientation, some cited obstacles to providing quality services. Several programs reported difficulties finding stable staff due to the need to use college interns or AmeriCorps staff to fulfill certain program roles; others mentioned challenges to program coordinators, who found it necessary to attend meetings scheduled from early in the morning to late at night. Other program staff, accustomed to a verbal exchange of information in weekly staffings, reported feeling challenged by some schools' requests that required formal, written documentation of services. Other reported barriers to providing customer service-oriented programs include distrust of social services among families; dealing with families in crisis or who have chemical dependency or mental health issues that preclude their full participation in the program; and differing agency cultures, such as schools or agencies whose priorities impeded their ability to focus on individual family needs. Coordinating schedules to ensure that key stakeholders are available to serve on family support teams was also a challenge to many programs.

## Preventive Services

Another of the principles of the Family Policy Council is community-based prevention. The Readiness to Learn initiative supports family programs that:

- Encourage and support the creation of positive conditions in communities.
- Promote the well-being of families.
- Reduce the incidence of crises.
- Decrease the need for future services.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Preventive Services*

Readiness to Learn programs seem to be of two types: those whose focus has been prevention from the outset, and those that have turned attention to prevention activities after critically needed child and family services were organized. The many and varied prevention activities Readiness to Learn programs have sponsored or promoted include tutoring; homework clubs; mentor programs; peer mediation; health fairs; immunization clinics; health screenings; structured recess activities; after-school, Saturday, and summer recreation programs; pregnancy, substance abuse, and violence prevention programs; anger management and stress reduction classes; teen parent programs; parent support groups; and parenting skills workshops. Some programs have addressed prevention by focusing most of their services on early childhood (preschool through Grade 3), or forming partnerships with ECEAP, Head Start, Even Start, and other community preschool programs. Other prevention strategies entail providing staff with training on such topics as domestic violence prevention and suicide prevention. The Connections program on Vashon Island reported:

> Connections gives regular input and evaluation to all prevention programs of the Vashon Schools and Vashon Youth and Family Services. We assist in planning and reviewing service delivery and effectiveness. For referred students we have an ongoing role in behavior, attendance, and/or academic

> concerns. We have taken the lead in bringing advocacy for domestic violence prevention to our community.

Most Readiness to Learn programs partner with other agencies to offer prevention activities, particularly in the area of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug abuse prevention. Other common partners are school PTAs or similar organizations that cosponsor family activities and parenting education classes at school. In addition, immunization clinics have been offered at many Readiness to Learn sites in conjunction with the Department of Health.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Preventive Services*

Program staff indicated that the overwhelming needs and crises of children and families prevent them from focusing more on prevention activities. Program staff often experience the dilemma of ensuring that prevention planning takes place while still meeting immediate family needs. One coordinator observed, "Sometimes needed services are coming to light and move to crisis in a short period of time, which eliminates lead time for planning." Another said, "Often the most dysfunctional families who need much more intensive services than we can actually provide are the ones that are referred." Staff also cited inadequate funding; need for more case managers to increase preventive services; and a need to educate schools, agencies, and communities in a model that involves building assets and support services tailored to the individual family needs to avert or prevent crises.

## Outcome-Oriented Services

This principle focuses on the extent to which Readiness to Learn programs are committed to and working toward achieving quantifiable outcomes for children and families. The Family Policy Council suggests that Readiness to Learn programs:

- Include a fair and realistic system for measuring both short-range and long-range progress to determine whether efforts make a difference.

- Use outcomes and indicators that reflect the goals communities establish for themselves and their children.
- Work toward these goals and outcomes at all staff levels and in every agency.
- Provide a mechanism for informing the development of program policies.

### *Successful Strategies for Providing Outcome-Oriented Services*

Readiness to Learn program staff and consortium members recognize that increased efforts to quantify outcomes can improve services to children and families, provide stakeholders with valuable information about program progress, and meet state grant requirements. Nearly all of the Readiness to Learn programs demonstrated progress in this area in 1998–99 by collecting and providing more complete child and family outcome data to the evaluation team. The Family Learning Center in the Camas School District reported, "All the data collected are relevant to the realization of family and program goals. Consortium and staff are evaluating program effectiveness continuously." In addition, many Readiness to Learn programs have developed detailed family plans that identify each family's strengths, needs, goals, and expected outcomes. Team members periodically review the status of each plan to ensure that milestones and outcomes are achieved. Kennewick Advantage reported that their clients are "involved in the planning of the needs, goals and strategies, enabling them to set up outcome and self-monitoring techniques with the agency."

On a more global level, some programs invest considerable effort in developing community needs assessments; logic models to connect needs, services, and outcomes; broader consortium goals; and measurable outcome indicators. In fact, a few programs, either in collaboration with their consortia or on their own, have conducted surveys to identify needs in the community and areas in which families are being served successfully. For example, Lopez Island used the outcome of a survey to determine a need for after-school care.

### *Challenges or Barriers to Providing Outcome-Oriented Services*

Readiness to Learn program staff reported that the primary challenge to maintaining an outcome orientation for services is the time and training needed to complete the necessary paperwork. Other barriers include a lack of uniform record keeping among the schools Readiness to Learn serves and the fact that the mobility of the at-risk populations Readiness to Learn programs serve make longitudinal outcomes and even annual outcomes difficult to provide. Programs also mentioned difficulties finding ways to measure the impact of the services on families and special needs students. One program coordinator remarked, "Readiness to Learn is a process, not a product. Qualities like self-esteem cannot be measured. We need to collect both quantitative and qualitative information." Programs also indicated the fact that positive outcomes often take longer than the time period for data collection allows.

# Conclusion: Is Readiness to Learn Working?

Over the past six years, Readiness to Learn programs in Washington State have accomplished many of their goals for service integration and service delivery to children and families. As a result of these services, more children arrive at school ready to learn and able to attain the skills needed to meet the state's essential academic learning requirements. Chapter 1 of this report described the need for Readiness to Learn programs, the funding history, goals and expected outcomes, general service delivery strategies, and key evaluation questions.

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the 31 local programs funded in 1997–99 and the characteristics of the children and families served during the 1998–99 school year. Readiness to Learn programs are funded in communities ranging from small and rural to large and urban, and service areas range from individual school districts to multiple-county collaborations. Fifty-five percent of the children who participated in Readiness to Learn in 1998–99 were elementary school students in kindergarten through Grade 5. More than half of the participants were white (55 percent), and 38 percent lived in two-parent families. The most frequent reasons for referral to Readiness to Learn were academic problems (44 percent), school behavior problems (29 percent), family problems (27 percent), unmet basic family needs (27 percent), and low interest in school (22 percent).

Chapter 3 reported on the services received by children and families. The largest number of families (83 percent) received services designed to increase their involvement in the education of their children. Nearly half of the families (56 percent) received help meeting basic needs such as food, clothing, transportation, and housing. Fifty-four percent of families participated in personal or family counseling or other services designed to strengthen the family or improve the mental health of its members. More than one-third (37 percent) of the families obtained some assistance in the area of physical health. Most Readiness to Learn programs also offered group services in which individual participation was not documented. Many of these activities were open to the entire community and were designed to prevent rather than solve problems. These group services included such activities as health fairs, after-school and summer recreation programs, tutoring programs, parenting skills classes, and substance abuse prevention assemblies. During the past year, over 62,071 individuals participated in 1,006 group activities.

Chapter 4 addressed the extent to which Readiness to Learn met the needs of children and families. Readiness to Learn programs assess individual family needs and provide a variety of services tailored to meet those needs. Programs follow up with varying frequency, depending on individual families' situations. Needs are more likely to be met when they are short-term in nature. Long-term needs require that services be provided over an extended period of time if they are to be met. Families were generally very satisfied with the services they received and appreciated that these were tailored for their needs and delivered with respect and sensitivity. Families indicated that the services had empowered them to identify and seek out help in the future.

Chapter 5 discussed the impact of these services on children and families. Program staff reported at least one outcome for most participating families. Nearby three-fourths of the families reported an outcome with a direct impact on children's performance in school. Over one-half of the families reported an outcome related to a mental health issue (54 percent) or a basic family need such as food or clothing (57 percent). At the elementary school level, teachers reported improvement in the classroom performance of 57 percent of the students referred for academic problems. At the middle school and high school levels, no significant overall improvement was observed in GPA, although 46 percent of the students made improvements. In terms of school attendance, elementary school teachers observed significantly fewer attendance problems at the end of the school year for students who had received Readiness to Learn services. Actual attendance data at all grade levels revealed no significant change in average days absent, even though 43 percent of the students improved their attendance. Readiness to Learn programs also collected data on three indicators of student behavior in school: teacher ratings of behavior, the number of office referrals or detentions, and the number of days students were suspended. Teachers rated a significant improvement in behavior among students who had been referred for inappropriate behavior. Students referred to Readiness to Learn for behavioral problems had received significantly fewer office referrals or detentions on average at follow-up. Finally, in terms of suspensions, 20 percent of the students with behavior referrals showed a reduction in the number of days suspended, although no statistically significant change occurred in the average number of days suspended. On the whole, the empirical data collected from teachers and school records again confirmed expectations that Readiness to Learn demonstrated short-term outcomes on indicators of school success among many students that participated in the program.

Chapter 6 discussed Readiness to Learn's contribution to community safety. Virtually all Readiness to Learn program coordinators reported that their schools provide services related to tobacco, alcohol and other prevention and intervention services, conflict resolution, and behavior and academic problems. Program coordinators also reported that their neighborhoods offer services that support safety, healthy activities, and an environment supportive of healthy youth development. The most common neighborhood services include volunteer services, library programs, and youth clubs or sports activities. All program coordinators indicated believing that Readiness to Learn positively impacts school and neighborhood safety either directly through Readiness to Learn programs or indirectly by increasing awareness of and involvement in positive activities and support networks.

Chapter 7 discussed the ways in which Readiness to Learn has contributed to systemic change in terms of service delivery to families and children. Programs have contributed to service integration through networking with community services and by hiring staff who provide creative, barrier-free services. Programs have brought about systemic changes in service delivery through the kinds of services they provide, resulting in decreased waiting times for families who need services. Programs have also contributed to changing cultural and community attitudes by providing bilingual and bicultural staff and by working to increase cooperation by community agencies and school districts. These changes have been brought about largely by frequent, open, and honest communication and by regular meetings of consortium members.

Chapter 8 highlighted the successful practices used by Readiness to Learn programs in adhering to the eight Family Policy Initiative principles of service integration. Grantees generally rated themselves highly on each of these principles.

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# Appendix: Characteristics of Readiness to Learn Programs

## Exhibit A1
## Characteristics of Washington Readiness to Learn Programs 1998–99

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Connections | Vashon Island School District | Vashon Island | 3 | Vashon Youth and Family Services; Vashon Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families; Washington Mutual Bank; Vashon Teen Center; and YMCA | 20 | K–12 |
| 3 | Family Learning Center | Camas School District | Camas and Washougal | 1 | DSHS, DOH; Clark Community College EOC; Clark County PIC; Employment Security, and local libraries | 12 | Pre-K and Adult Basic Education |
| 5 | Greater Yakima Partnership for Children and Families | ESD 105 | ESD 105 and Sunnyside | 8 | Yakima Community Services, Catholic Family and Child Services, and Central Washington Mental Health Enterprise for Progress | 11 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 6 | Greater Pierce County Consortium for Children and Families | Puget Sound ESD | 16 districts | 56 | DSHS, Greater Lakes Mental Health, Good Sam Mental Health, Communities in Schools, and Lakewood United Way, Horizon Resources, Children's Home Society, ECEAP | 26 | Primarily K–6, 1 HS, 2 MS |
| 7 | Kennewick Advantage | Kennewick School District | Kennewick |  | Kennewick Housing Authority, DSHS, Benton/Franklin Juvenile Justice Center, Kennewick Police Department, YMCA, Columbia Basin College, and Head Start | 35 | K–12 |

*(table continues)*

**Exhibit A1 *(continued)***

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | KIDS First | Renton School District | Renton | 6 | Renton Communities in Schools, Department of Public Health, Valley Medical Center, Renton Area Youth and Family Services, City of Renton, West Hill Family Enrichment Center, and DSHS/DCFS | 36 | K–8 |
| 10 | Bridge Program | La Conner School District | La Conner | 3 | PIC, Skagit County at-Risk Intervention Services, Swinomish Family Services, Swinomish Youth Compliance Office, and Swinomish Drug and Alcohol Program, First Steps, Northwest Indian College, County Intervention Program, UW Educational Talent Search Program | 10 | 6–12 |
| 11 | Family Community Services Network | Lynden School District | Lynden | 4 | Opportunity Council, Project Hope, Northwest Youth Services, Bellingham Technical College, and Western Washington University | 25 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 12 | Mason County Communities in Schools | Shelton School District | Shelton, North Mason, Hood Canal, Mary M. Knight, Southside, Grapeview, and Pioneer | 11 | Mason County Health Department, Mason County Network, Juvenile Justice, Rural Health Council, Criminal Justice Working Team, Mason City Mental Health, Economic Development Council, and Indian Health Services Mason City Head Start | 12 | K–12 |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit A1 *(continued)*

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Mid-Valley Providers' Consortium | Toppenish School District | Wapato, Zillah, Mount Adams, Granger, and Toppenish | 14 | Yakima Valley Farm Workers' Clinic, Employment Security, DSHS, Child Protective Services, Salvation Army, Heritage College, Catholic Family and Child Services, Yakama Indian Nation | 40 | K–12 |
| 14 | Northern Chelan–Douglas County Consortium of School Districts | Manson School District | Lake Chelan, Manson, Bridgeport, and Mansfield | 4 | Lake Chelan Hospital, Lake Chelan Health Clinic, Catholic Family Services, and DSHS | 7 | K–12 |
| 15 | Nooksack Valley Family Services | Nooksack Valley School District | Nooksack Valley | 5 | Opportunity Council, Brigid Collins House, Department of Public Health, Nooksack Tribal Center, and Head Start | 25 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 16 | Family Empowerment Project | Okanogan School District | Brewster, Grand Coulee, Methow Valley, Okanogan, Tonasket, and Oroville | 8 | Employment Security, DSHS, Department of Health, Community Action Council, Health and Safety Network, and Colville Tribes and Family Planning | 27 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 17 | Project LOOK | Highline School District | Highline | 3 | King County Police, Dykeman Youth and Family Services, Highline Mental Health, Employment Security, and Seahurst and Brentwood apartments | 45 | Pre-K to Adult |
| 18 | Quillayute Valley Consortium | Quillayute Valley School District | Quillayute Valley and Quileute Tribal School | 5 | West End Outreach Services, Forks Abuse Program, Quileute Tribe, DSHS, Child Protective Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Rainbow Day Care Agencies | 13 | K–12 |

*(table continues)*

Exhibit A1 *(continued)*

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Seattle Learn | Seattle Public Schools | Seattle | 14 | City of Seattle Housing and Human Services, King County Health, DSHS, King County Health and Safety Network, and Northwest Youth and Family Service | 32 | K–12 |
| 20 | South Chelan–Douglas County | North Central ESD | Cascades, Cashmere, Eastmont, Orondo Palisades, Entiat, North Central ESD and Wenatchee | 25 | Division of Child and Family Services, Regional Support Network, Chelan–Douglas Health, Children's Home Society, and Catholic Family Services | 25 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 21 | Stevens County Readiness to Learn | ESD 101 | 15 school districts in Stevens County | 13 | Northeast Washington Regional Service Network, DSHS, Child Protective Services, Stevens County Counseling, Daybreak Drug Treatment, Northeast Tri-County Health, Rural Resources Development Association, Head Start, community colleges, and Community Health and Safety Network, Department of Juvenile Justice | 27 | K–12 |
| 22 | Success Through School Attendance | ESD 113 | Griffin, Yelm, Olympia, Tenino, North Thurston, Tumwater, Rochester, and Rainier | 20 | Partners for Children, Youth, and Families; housing authority; TOGETHER! for Drug-Free Youth; health department; family support center; Partners for Prevention; JTPA programs; and DSHS | 34 | K–6 |

*(table continues)*

**Exhibit A1** ***(continued)***

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Walla Walla County Readiness to Learn | ESD 123 | Touchet, Prescott, College Place, Waitsburg, Dixie, Walla Walla, and Columbia | 9 | Health Department, Department of Mental Health, Employment Security; Blue Mountain Action Council, DSHS, CTED, and ECEAP | 30 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 24 | Washington Alliance | Everett School District | Edmonds, Everett, Northshore, and Shoreline | 15 | DSHSC King and Snohomish, Mental Health, Northshore-King County Health, Employment Security, Community Health and Safety Network, Snohomish County Human Services, United Way of King County | 40 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 25 | West Valley Readiness to Learn | West Valley School District | West Valley | 8 | Employment Security, Community Colleges of Spokane, Community Mental Health, JTPA, Eastern Washington Family Care, Title IX, Indian Education Spokane Community Violence Consortium Spokane County Prosecutor, and Youth Help Association | 16 | K–12 |
| 26 | Whidbey Island Readiness to Learn | South Whidbey School District | Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and South Whidbey | 19 | Division of Child and Family Services, Island County Health Department, Housing Authority, Employment Security, and Recovery Center—St. Joseph's Hospital | 36 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 27 | Family Information Centers | Bellingham School District | Bellingham | 5 | Brigid Collins House, Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College, Bellingham Police Department, Sea Mar, ECONW, Opportunity Council | 10 | K–5 |

*(table continues)*

**Exhibit A1** *(continued)*

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Blaine Family Services Center | Blaine School District | Blaine | 1 | DSHS, Brigid Collins House, opportunity council, Whatcom Crisis Services, Whatcom Dispute Resolution, and Catholic Community Services | 20 | K–2 |
| 29 | Family Empowerment Project | Ephrata School District | Ephrata and Warden | 6 | DSHS, Private Industry Council, Family Services of Grant County, Catholic Family Services, Ephrata Interchurch Council, and the Grant County Housing Authority | 22 | K–12 |
| 30 | Granite Falls Family Services | Granite Falls School District | Granite Falls | 1 | DSHS, Snohomish County Health District, the Boys and Girls Club, the Granite Falls Food Bank, and the University of Washington Dental Program | 22 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 31 | BOOTS | Hood Canal School District | Hood Canal | 1 | Washington National Guard, Skokomish Tribal, Simpson Timber Education, Skokomish Health Center, Mason County Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Court Youth Programs, Shelton DSHS, and Drug Demand Reduction Program, Shelton High School | 15 | 6–8 |
| 32 | Lopez Family Resource Center | Lopez Island School District | Lopez Island | 1 | San Juan County Health and Community Services, DSHS, San Juan County Juvenile Court Services, San Juan County Community Network, and Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services | 25 | K–12 |

*(table continues)*

**Exhibit A1** *(continued)*

| Prog. No. | Program Name | Fiscal Agent | Names of Participating School Districts | No. of Schools or Sites | Key Partners | Total No. of Partners in Consortium | Grade Levels Served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | Orcas Island Family Resource Center | Orcas Island School District | Orcas Island | 3 | Children's House, San Juan County Health and Human Services, private industry council, Orcas Island Primary Intervention Program (PIP), and North Island's Counseling and Psychotherapy | 14 | Pre-K to 12 |
| 34 | Shaw Middle School Community School Program | Spokane School District | Shaw Middle School | 1 | Children's Home Society, DSHS, Northeast Community Center, Lutheran Social Services, Department of Mental Health, Breakthrough for Families, Parent Coalition, Drugs and Alcohol Department at Deaconess Hospital, JTPA Program, and Eastern Washington University | 20 | 6–8 |